Guide for Families

Swansea University Prifysgol Abertawe | Student Life Bywyd Myfyrwyr

Contents

We hope you find this guide helpful - here's what you can expect to find inside:

Welcome - Page 1
- The VISA Advice Team

Visa and Immigration - Page 2
- Dependants
- EU/EEA/Swiss Students
- Non EU/EEA International Students
- Student Route Visa

Work and Study for Dependants - Page 7
- Standard Visitors
- PBS Dependants

Schooling in the UK - Page 10
- Education Pathways in Wales
- Childcare -pre-school and after school
- Private schooling options
- Applying for a school place

Life in Swansea - Page 13
- Where are we?
- Things to do - Adults, Children and Family Fun

Healthcare and Accommodation - Page 18
- Visitors and Short Term Students
- Health insurance
- Student Route visa holders
- EU/EEA/Swiss Students
- Regisering with a doctor or dentist
- Wellbeing and mental health

Accommodation - Page 20
- University accomodation
- Private lettings
- Signing a contract
- Temporary accommodation & International Short-Stay
- Accommodation Beyond Swansea (including transport and schools)

Welcome

Dear Student and Family,

Welcome to Swansea University, and thank you so much for choosing to come study and stay with us in beautiful Wales, UK. Swansea is a wonderful city for families, and you will find plenty of activities for children and partners of all ages to help you enjoy your time here.

This booklet is a useful guide to planning, travelling and living with your family here in Swansea. We know it can all be a little daunting taking such a huge step, so we like to hope that we can help take some of those worries away from you. We are lucky that local schools, Swansea County Council and other local teams and departments have all come together to help provide us with information for this guide and to ensure you are getting the advice you need. To further help you, you will also find details of how to get additional help and information on specific topics throughout the guide.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and travel and can't wait to welcome you all here to Swansea.

Emma, Head of Visas and International Student Advice (VISA)

The VISA Advice Team are here to help students, and their families, with all sorts of non-academic problems. We are fully trained immigration specialists but will try and assist with any queries about being an international student in the UK that you might have.

Visas and Immigration

It is vitally important that you know whether you will need a visa to study and bring your family to the UK as PBS (Points Based System) Dependants. This section will help you to understand the requirements on different nationalities. We outline the different visa routes and the implications each has on bringing your family with you.

Who can I bring to the UK as my dependant family?

Who you can bring to the UK as your dependant family, and what they can do whilst here, depends on **your nationalities, the type of immigration** you can apply for and the **length and type of course** that you are doing.

For **all** nationalities the following people would be classed as a dependant family member:

Your partner:

- Husband/wife or civil partner
- Fiancé/Fiancée
- Proposed civil partner/unmarried partner

Your child/children:

- Who is/are dependent on you
- Who meet age, and any other, requirements to do with immigration category or nationality (outlined in detail below)

Other family members (siblings, parents, uncles, cousins etc.) are not counted as dependants (except in some exceptional cases for EU/EEA/Swiss nationalities) and cannot apply to come to the UK with you as such.

However, you need to remember to check details relating to requirements for specific nationalities and immigration routes in order to be sure that your family are eligible to travel with you. You will find the different categories below to help you work this out.

EU/EEA/Swiss Students

If you and your dependants are from the EU/EEA or Switzerland, from the **1st July 2021** you will have needed the relevant immigration status to enter the UK for the purposes of work, study or to accompany your parents (if you are under 25 and still dependant on them). You may already have European Settlement Scheme (EUSS) status. If you have EUSS (either Settled on Pre-settled) status are are allowed to work, study and live in the UK without restrictions.

If you do not have EUSS status, you will need to apply for immigration leave under the new UK Immigration system:

- **Student Route visa** for courses of more than 6 months
- **Short-Term Study Visa** for English Language courses of between 6-11 months only
- **ETA** or a **Standard Visit Visa** for courses/exchanges of less than 6 months.

Further EU/EEA/Swiss information can be found on the University web pages here

If you are an EU/EEA/Swiss national, but your dependants are not, and you hold EUSS status, they can still come with you or join you provided they are direct family members (partner or dependant child).

No other family members have the automatic right to be in the UK with you, although in some exceptional cases you could try and apply for them as extended family members.

There is further helpful information around definitions of direct and extended family members, and who is classed as a dependant child, on the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website: https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student-advice/visas-and-immigration/eu-settlement-scheme/

Non EU/EEA/Swiss International Students

Students coming to study on a Short-Term Study Visa (STSV) and ETA or Standard Visitor Visa

If you are coming to study an English Language course between 6 and 11 months (either a single course or multiple defined English courses) you must apply for a **Short-Term Study Visa**.
To study a course for **less** than 6 months, even an English course, you must have an **ETA** or **Standard Visitor Visa**.
On a Short-Term Study, ETA or Standard Visit Visa, you are **not** able to bring your family as your dependants. They would have to apply for their own visa to be able to join or accompany you.

It is important to note that **it is prohibited to work or to access schooling on any of the Short-Term, ETA or Standard Visit Visa routes** and so your family members would not be able to work (including any form of work experience) or go to school in the UK. You would also need to make sure you had **comprehensive health insurance** to cover any people on these visa routes for the duration of your visit (please see the Healthcare section in this guide for further information around health insurance).

Information and guidance about the Short Term Study Visa can be found on our website

Information regarding the Standard Visit Visa can be found on our website

Short-Term Study, ETA or Standard Visas for non visa nationals
A small number of nationalities are able to apply for immigration permission **either** before travel to the UK or once they arrive at the Port of Entry (airport). They are called "non visa nationals". You can check whether you fall into this category via the Gov.UK website here: **www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa**

Most non visa nationals coming to the UK will require an ETA (electronic permission to travel) before they travel to the UK if they don't already hold a valid visa. If you are a non visa national, you will find the website tells you that 'you do not need a visa to come to the UK'; this is misleading as you **will** need a visa, it is just issued to you when you arrive rather than having to apply for it before you leave home, but you will require an ETA to travel. An ETA is not permission to enter.

If you are a non visa national, please carefully read our information about the Short Term Study and Standard Visitor Visa routes on our website.

Students coming to study on the Student Route visa

Student Route Visa holders commencing study in or after January 2024:

Following changes to UK immigration policies, international students who start their course after 1st January 2024 will not be eligible for dependants to join them in the UK with a Student Dependant Visa. There are a **small and specific number of exceptions to this**, so it is important you understand if you are eligible before making plans.

Student Dependant Visa applications can be made (but are not guaranteed) where the following criteria apply:

- You (the Student) are **Government Sponsored** and the course lasts **six months or longer; OR**
- Your (the Student's) course is a PhD, other doctoral qualification, or a postgraduate **research** degree of 9 months or longer

Student Route Visa Holders who commenced study before January 2024:

If you are studying a course which commenced before January 2024, then previous rules about dependants apply.

Family members can join you as your dependant in the UK if:

- You (the Student) are G**overnment Sponsored** and your course is **over six months long; OR**
- You (the Student) are studying a **postgraduate** level course (e.g. MSc, MEng, PhD etc.) that is **9 months or longer** at a **Higher Education Institution (which Swansea University is); OR**
- For Students who are c**urrently or have recently been studying in the UK only:**
  a. you had leave to study as a student **for your previous course** where the course was **over six months long** AND
  b. your permission is current or **expired no more than three months before this immigration application** AND
  c. your new immigration application is for a course **over six months** long AND
  d. your **dependants already have "student dependant" leave** AND
  e. you apply for immigration permission **at the same time** as your dependant

If you do not fall into one of the categories above then, unfortunately, you will not be able to bring family members with you to the UK.

Who is classed as a dependant for Student Route purposes?

The Student visa rules are very specific about who can join you in the UK as a dependant and what your overall family situation must be for those dependants to be able to apply to come with you.

Eligible dependants are:

1. **Your partner**
   a. Husband/wife or Civil partner
   b. Unmarried or same sex partner, with whom you have been living in a relationship similar to marriage/civil partnership for a period of at least 2 years. You will need to provide significant evidence of this relationship

c. In addition, you must meet the following family requirements:
   - You (the Student) and your partner must both be at least 18 years old
   - The relationship between the Student and their partner must be genuine and subsisting
   - Your partner must not intend to stay in the UK longer than you (the Student)

2. Your child (who is dependant on you)

a. If your child is applying to come to the UK as your dependant for the **first time**, they **must be less than 18 years old when they apply** AND

b. They must **not have formed an independent family unit or be leading an independent life**, and they must not intend to do so in the UK ie:
   - they do not have a spouse, civil partner or unmarried partner
   - they live with their parents, except where they are living away from the family home due to academic endeavours e.g. attending boarding school or university
   - they are not employed full-time (unless aged 18 years or over)
   - they are wholly or mainly dependent upon their parents for financial support (unless aged 18 years or over)
   - they are wholly or mainly dependent upon their parents for emotional support

For child dependant applications, **both of the child's parents must be coming to live in the UK (although neither can be coming with immigration permission as a 'visitor')**

It is very important that you fully understand the requirements if planning to bring family to the UK as dependants. Some students are shocked that they cannot bring wider family members, or choose to bring their children to the UK if one parent is planning on staying in the home country (or travelling elsewhere). It is important to us that we help to manage expectations of what is possible under UK immigration law, and assist you in avoiding any unnecessary difficulties or financial outlay.

Lone Parents

You should note that cases where children are granted dependant visas to travel to the UK with a lone parent (where the other parent is still alive) **are not usual,** even if the parents are formally divorced. If you are a lone parent, please do not think that you can travel to the UK and just apply for your child to join you on arrival or at a later date. This is extremely risky and it will not help your case at all to do so. Equally, do not state that both parents will be present in the UK if this is not the case. **This is classed as deception and can lead to an automatic ban from the UK of up to 10 years for you and your dependants.** We advise you take expert legal advice if you believe that you have an exceptional circumstance necessitating your children to travel with you as a lone parent. However, you might initially like to contact our International Student Advisers as they may be able to offer some first thoughts on this to help you. You can email them at: VISA.Advice@swansea.ac.uk You should ensure that **all family members have the correct immigration** before leaving your home country. Failure to do so can cause enormous worry and upset, as well as negatively affecting your studies and your finances.

Bringing your family under other immigration routes

If you are coming to study at the University under a different immigration route, please contact us so that we can look at your individual situation. Our email is:
VISA.Advice@swansea.ac.uk

Work and Study for Dependants

We understand that it is important for you know whether you dependants will be able to work and/or study whilst in the UK as this will help you plan for your family.

If your family is with you as a:

- **Standard Visitor**
  - Work and work experience is **prohibited**
  - Study is permitted for up to 30 days but **must not be the primary reason** for coming to the UK
  - Children **will not** be able to register for state schooling

- **EUSS Family Member**
  - Work and study is unrestricted
  - Children can access UK state schooling

- **PBS Dependant (including Student Route dependant)**
  - Work is usually permitted if they:
    - Hold a visa which is 12 months or more in length
    - Are the dependant of a government sponsored student on a course of 6 months or more
    - Have a visa of less than 12 months in length but it is an extension to a visa where they are dependant on a student continuing a course of 9 months or more

- If work is permitted there is:
  - No restriction on working hours
  - Some restrictions on types of work (including setting up and running your own business, working as a professional sportsperson or as a doctor or dentist in training)

- The dependant's permission to work will be stated on their eVisa, if they are not allowed to work it should say Work Prohibited. Work is prohibited if they:
  - Hold a visa which is less than **12 months in length AND**
  - They are **not** the dependant of a government sponsored student

There are no restrictions on study on a PBS Dependant.

However, there may be restrictions set by the education establishment to which your dependant(s) are applying. For example, an institution may expect them to demonstrate that they have immigration permission for the entirety of a course before allowing them to enrol. It is important they discuss their immigration status before enrolling on any course of study to ensure that you do not face any future difficulties as a family.

Children will usually be entitled to access free of charge school places, starting with 10 hours per week from age 3, and full time schooling from age 5.

Please see the following section for information: Schooling in the UK

Schooling in the UK

Many students (where possible) opt to bring their children with them to the UK and enrol them in local schools. This is a wonderful opportunity for your children to learn about the UK and meet new friends. It also allows local children to learn about different countries, cultures and languages and it is certainly an asset to developing the open, multi-cultural society Swansea prides itself on.

However, having an ever changing student body and dealing sensitively and successfully with children from all over the world, does bring challenges to the schools as well. This is where you can help the schools and your children by making sure that you are doing all you can to understand the UK education system and are engaging positively with it.

It is very important for you to understand that **you must plan and arrange schooling and childcare in advance**. You cannot take your child to a school without having first applied for and secured a place - please **do not go to a school with your child hoping you can leave them there. You will be turned away and referred to the application process**, and this can be distressing for your child.

Information on how to find and arrange childcare and schooling is contained below, and on our webpage: UK Schools & Childcare- International Students

Before you can apply for a school place you must have arranged your permanent / long-term UK address. You will be required to provide evidence of this, and it will be part of the considerations made when allocating a school.

While we provide whatever advice and guidance we can, applying for a school place and arranging additional childcare and education is the responsibility of parents. The University cannot do this for you.

It is important that you plan childcare so that you can study successfully.We must make you aware that children are **not permitted at lectures, seminars, or other teaching activities on campus and any teaching or learning events that happen off campus.**

The Education Pathway in Wales

This section will help you to understand which stage of education your child or children are at and whether you will be able to access state schooling and childcare provision for them.

Pre-school: this is available from private childcare providers full time, it is not free. Some providers will take babies from 3 months on-wards and children can stay until they reach 5 years old (when it is compulsory for them to start formal schooling)

Nursery: this is available free on a part-time basis (either morning or afternoons as decided by the individual school) and is for children aged 3. Some schools will work with private providers to arrange on site or close child care for the rest of the day but this is not free.

Reception: this is available full time for free and is for children aged 5 years old.

Years 1-7: this is available full time for free at a Primary School and is for children aged 6 to 11 years old.

Years 8-11: this is available full time for free at a Secondary School and is for children aged 11-16 years old.

The school day typically runs between 8.50am and 3.15pm. You will need to check exact times with your allocated school(s). Some schools run a Breakfast Club where students pay a small daily fee for breakfast and care before the school day starts. Some schools will also have an After School Club where parents can pay for their children to be looked after until the end of the working day (usually between 5.30-6pm dependent on the provider). After School Clubs are sometimes cheaper than private providers but sometimes you may have to wait for a place to become available.

There are plenty of childcare providers in the area who can help with pre-school or after school care. Fees can vary slightly in price but you should expect to pay around £35-45 per day for private childcare, £20-30 per half day and around £15-£20 for after school collection and care. This price will normally include some snacks and meals. You will be able to find details of providers on the Swansea Council Childcare Directory which you will find here: https://www.swansea.gov.uk/childcare

Swansea University Students' Union runs an onsite Nursery at Singleton Park campus. However, it is extremely popular and you may have to wait for a place to become available. You will find further information, including the application process on their website here: www.swansea-union.co.uk/support/nursery/aboutus/

Private schooling
If you would prefer to send your child or children to a **private fee paying school** for their whole education, this option is also available in Swansea.
Boys and girls aged between 2-11 are able to apply to attend Oakleigh House. Details of the school including fees and the application process can be found here: www.oakleighhouseschool.co.uk/

Secondary school education can be accessed via Ffynone House. This school takes boys and girls from aged 11-18. Details of the school including fees and the application process can be found here: www.ffynonehouseschool.co.uk/

Applying for a school place
If you would like your child or children to attend a local Swansea school you will need to apply via the Swansea County Council Schools Admission's Team. You can do this **before coming to the UK** but you will need an accommodation address. There is a comprehensive Information Guide for Parents which can be found on the Council website here: www.swansea.gov.uk/informationforparents

You should be prepared to be asked for confirmation that your child has the correct visa to allow them to study. They cannot apply for a school place holding any form of Visit Visa for example. You may be asked to provide a scan or copy of this permission, as well as their passport and your student offer letter confirming the length of your course. This will help the Schools Admissions Team to process your application quickly.

You should also be prepared to disclose whether your child has a disability or Special Educational Need (SEN). This will allow the Schools Admissions Team to make sure that the school to which your child is allocated will be adequately equipped to provide them with the best experience. If a school needs additional staff or resource to support your child, they will often have to apply for this at designated points in the academic year. If you do not let them know of your child's needs, it can cause significant resourcing issues and affect the ability of the school to deliver the quality of education they would like to all students. Please do not think that your child would be refused schooling because of a disclosure around a disability or SEN. The professionals involved just need to have time to prepare properly.

You should always arrive in time for your children to start the school year (or term) on time. The new school year starts every September, and so you need to arrive in the UK (and have arranged a school place) by then. If you are arriving for a January start course, you will need to have made every effort to arrange schooling and childcare **well before your course start date**.

Life in Swansea

Moving to a new city is exciting but can also be challenging and stressful; especially if you're bringing your family. Fortunately, Swansea is used to welcoming students from all over the world and there are plenty of things to do and see in the city that'll keep you busy, help you settle in, and make you feel more at home. Take a look at some of the ideas below!

Where are we?
Swansea is located right on the South Wales coast in Swansea Bay. Thanks to the M4 motorway and excellent rail links, the rest of the UK is very accessible from Swansea.

Cardiff, the capital city of Wales, is 40 miles from Swansea and you can get there is just over an hour by road or train. Cardiff also boasts an International Airport with direct and indirect flights to dozens of destinations all over the UK and worldwide. A flight to Edinburgh from Cardiff (a distance of 400 miles) will only take about an hour!

The English city of Bristol, 80 miles away, is roughly an hour and a half by car/bus or train just over the Severn Bridge. Bristol Airport also offers hundreds of flights to international locations with a variety of airlines to choose from.

London is just under 200 miles from Swansea but takes less than 4 hours to reach by train or by car along the M4. The biggest city Europe, London is also home to five major international airports - Heathrow, Stanstead, Luton, Gatwick and London City.

For information on travelling to the UK and Swansea please see our information here

Things to do

Swansea is full of great things for you and your family to get involved with - here you'll find some ideas for adults, children and the whole family to enjoy. This is not an exhaustive list of ideas, we're just starting you off - there is plenty more on offer!

Adults
From sports teams and clubs to socialising, there are plenty of things for adults to enjoy while they live in Swansea! There are theatres, cinemas, libraries and parks all waiting to be discovered.

Sport
If you're looking to get involved with sport, there are a variety of ways to do so. There are a range of sporting facilities available for public use - often for free. You can search for sport facilities on the Swansea Council website: www.swansea.gov.uk/sport. If you're looking for a specific team to join, a quick Google search should show you what's available to join in Swansea. Another great resource is the Swansea University Sport Swansea website: www.swansea.ac.uk/sport/ - they offer reduced rates at the gym and for using certain facilities for dependants accompanying students.

Gyms, pools and fitness classes which are strictly **female only** are very popular in the UK. Many gyms have whole rooms dedicated to ladies fitness and timetable classes to which only ladies are allowed access. The LC2 in Swansea offer a full female only programme which can be viewed here: www.thelcswansea.com/ladies and many other gyms/pool around the city offer the same.
There are also many sports centres managed by Swansea Council, each with slightly different facilities, which you like might like to explore here:
www.swansea.gov.uk/activeswanseacentres

Hobbies and clubs
If you'd like to try out a new hobby or refresh a skill while living in Swansea, joining a class or club would be a great way to do so while making new friends at the same time. Check the Swansea Council website for more details: www.swansea.gov.uk/lifelonglearning

Volunteering
If you'd like to volunteer your time for a worthy cause, some volunteering opportunities are available to students' dependants through Discovery Volunteering Swansea (the volunteering service at Swansea University). You can contact them directly to find out more: www.discoverysvs.org/get-in-touch/

- **The Women's Institute (WI)**
  - The WI has existed for over 100 years now the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK. The WI is based on the ideals of fellowship, truth, tolerance and justice. The organisation is non-sectarian, non-party political and a great place to meet new friends. Find out more here: www.thewi.org.uk

Language classes
Maybe you'd like to improve your English skills while living in the UK? Swansea University's English Language Teaching Service (ELTS) run a range of courses to help with language skills - some beginners and intermediate classes are free for dependants of fee paying students! There are also higher level classes which charge a fee. Visit the ELTS webpage for more: www.swansea.ac.uk/english-language-training-services/

Socialising
Eating out is always a popular thing to do in the UK and Swansea is home to many different restaurants catering for a range of different tastes - maybe try something new or find a taste of home! Use the link to TripAdviser to explore all the different options available to you in the city and beyond: https://tinyurl.com/y2ejemr7

Or why not join our **Monthly GO! Eat:** tickets and more information are available from our Events Pages

Swansea has a shopping centre with some major retailers and independent shops, along with the vibrant Swansea Market - the biggest undercover market in Wales! Find out more here: www.swansea.gov.uk/citycentreshops

A great resource for searching for a wide range of activities is this website: www.swansea.gov.uk/whatson which details events and things to do in Swansea throughout the whole year. Definitely one to check out!

Children
Check out the information below for ideas on how to keep your little ones busy while you're here in Swansea - you'll find plenty of ideas to help them have fun and make new friends.

Sports clubs
There are plenty of fun sports clubs and activities for children to join in with across Swansea. The LC2 offer a range of sport courses - for details visit: www.thelcswansea.com/lc-sports-courses

Each sports centre managed by Swansea Council offers different sporting and fitness provision for children - usually at reduced fees. Follow the link to find out more: www.swansea.gov.uk/activeswanseacentres

Other local children's clubs are also advertised here:
www.familiesonline.co.uk/local/swansea-bay-mumbles-and-gower/clubs-and-classes

After school clubs
Some schools may provide clubs for children to attend straight after lessons for a range of different activities - speak to your child's teacher for more information about what's on offer (the teacher will be happy to help).
You can find out more about after school clubs here:
www.swansea.gov.uk/outofschoolchildcareclub

Family Fun
Swansea is wonderfully family friendly city and a great place to bring up children. There's plenty to do to encourage quality family time which everyone will enjoy!

Beaches are one of Swansea's most amazing resources for families - come rain or shine, a visit to the beach is always fun! Swansea Beach is conveniently located right across from the city centre and the university itself. It can be accessed from various locations across the city. However, Swansea is home to the Gower Peninsular, home to dozens of different beaches you can spend your family time exploring together. Check out the this link to learn more:
www.visitswanseabay.com/inspirations/beaches/

Plantasia is one of the most famous destinations in Swansea for a family day out - this giant greenhouse in the city centre allows you to explore plants from all over the world under one roof! Find out more here: www.plantasiaswansea.co.uk/centre/plantasia

The LC2 is Swansea's biggest indoor leisure centre, with swimming, surfing, play and climbing facilities, alongside a variety of clubs and activities aimed at all ages.
www.thelcswansea.com/

Along with spectacular beaches, Swansea is also home to numerous parks. Singleton Park, a beautifully location right next to Swansea University, features a boating lake, crazy golf, an adventure playground, botanical gardens as well as hosting various events throughout the year. Find out more here: www.swansea.gov.uk/singletonpark

Swansea is also home to captivating museums:

- The National Waterfront Museum - https://museum.wales/swansea/
- Swansea Museum - www.swansea.gov.uk/swanseamuseum

both of which are free to enter, and which feature various collections and exhibitions, and host a variety of activities and events throughout the year. And don't forget to visit Swansea Universiy's very own museum, The Egypt Centre, which hosts events specially designed for children to get closer to their ancient treasures: www.egypt.swan.ac.uk/

This is just a small sample of the family friendly activities that Swansea has to offer - visit the website www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk/, which is a comprehensive site with information and links to a range of activities in and around Swansea. It includes activities for children, families and all age groups (free and paid). The website also features interactive maps and links for further information.

We also recommend visiting http://tourismswanseabay.co.uk which is the Swansea tourism website, featuring a comprehensive guide to Swansea and the surrounding areas, including information on things to do, places to stay, where to eat, and what events and activities are happening, with links and information to assist.

www.visitswanseabay.com/events/ another Swansea tourism site with information and links to a variety of topics, including destinations, things to do, places to stay, food and drink and events and activities.

Community Support Groups

Swansea is home to a number of supportive and helpful organisations who work specifically with the BAME community. These are great ways to connect and make friends, and family and child based events are run throughout the year.

BMHS - Located on High Street, BMHS provide family fun days and trips alongside a range of student and community support services - www.bamementalhealth.org

EYST - This organisation, located on St Helens Road, offers youth drop-in centres, workshops, trips and other activites as well as things like a homework support club and support for international families - eyst.org.uk

Healthcare

When moving to a new country, you and your family's healthcare needs are very important. This section should help you understand how to deal with this when moving to Swansea.

Pregnancy - International Students & Family Members
We have a bespoke Pregnancy & Maternity Information Guide for International Students and Family Members. This provides important information about healthcare, childcare, visas and much more.

Standard Visit Visa holders
Standard visitor visa holders are not entitled to free health care during their time in the UK and will need to secure private medical insurance for the length of their stay.

Not having private medical insurance will not affect your immigration application, however if you become an NHS debtor by using the health service in the UK as a visitor, and not paying for the treatment, this will have an effect on any future visa applications made and could lead to future applications being refused. There are some companies that offer specific insurance plans for international students so it may be worth having a look at those. Here is an example of one below:

- **Insure2Study Overseas** www.insure2study.com/

Other insurance providers are available and you can use any provider you wish.

Please see further information about the Visitor immigration route here

Short Term Student Visa Holders
The STSV route now includes compulsory payment of the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as part of the application process. Paying the IHS will give you access to the UK's National Health Service. Please see further information about this route here

Student Visa Holders
If you are coming to the UK to study a course that is longer than six months as a Student visa holder, then you will pay the Immigration Health Surcharge as part of your Student visa application.

This allows you to access free NHS medical care while you are in the UK. Your spouse/civil partner and your children will also be entitled to free NHS treatment but they must be with you in the UK as your dependant, and not as visitors. Dependants will be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge as part of their dependant visa application. For further information, please visit our PBS Dependant webpages.

EU/EEA and Swiss Students
We recommend that all students get a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) if they can. Having that document may impact on your smoothly accessing UK healthcare, future eligibility under some UK immigration routes (e.g. Citizenship) and aiding eligibility for a refund of any Immigration Health Surcharge fees paid under the Student Route.

If you have been granted EUSS status, you will have free access to standard NHS services. However, you should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for you and your family members in your country of residence to bring with you to the UK. Visit the European Commission for further information regarding EHIC:
http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/education/university/health/index_en.htm

If you do not have EUSS status, you will either need to arrange private healthcare for the time you are in the UK or you will need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge as part of your immigration application. Each route has Healthcare information detailed under the relevant visa route information found via our Visas and Immigration pages

Registering with a Doctor
You should register with a doctor or a General Practitioner (GP) soon after you arrive. Students can register themselves with a GP at the University Health Centre or with one closer to your accommodation. Students with **children** will need to register with a local GP's Surgery near their accommodation. You will need your Immigration Health Surcharge reference number that was allocated to you during the visa application process.

The University Health Centre is based on Singleton Campus and can be contacted via the details below:

Address: University Health Centre, Penmaen Residence, Swansea University, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PG
Tel: +44 (0)1792 295321 (0800 - 1830 Monday - Friday)
Fax: +44 (0)1792 295854

If you go to the following website, it will provide you with further information on registering with a GP and services provided including registering with a dentist:
www.swansea.ac.uk/study/student-life/health-and-welfare/health-centre/

The Health Centre also has its own website:
https://universityhealthcentreswansea.nhs.wales/

Wellbeing and Mental Health
Swansea University's Wellbeing Services are available to all students and are there to support you if you feel like you need help. There are valuable online resources so that you can use in private or they also offer face-to-face appointments if you need to talk to someone. You can find more information on the services they offer here:
www.swansea.ac.uk/wellbeing

Accommodation

If you are coming to study at Swansea University and your family are travelling with you, your accommodation will probably be one of you 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 an 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.

It is also important to note that as soon as you have a UK address you can apply for any school places that you will need- even if you haven't yet arrived in the UK! We recommend doing this if possible.

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.

Most 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. As well as the information below, please see our International Students' Guide.

There is a significant shortage of family housing in the Swansea area. **Many students who travel without family accommodation arranged face serious difficulty housing their families. This causes stress and a large financial burden from staying in hotels and short-term properties.**

If you are not able to arrange family accommodation before you travel **we strongly recommend you travel on your own, use short-term accommodation options until you can secure housing and then have your dependents join you once this is arranged. See Page xx for information**

Types of Accommodation
There are 3 ways that you can find accommodation in the UK. These are: University accommodation; private accommodation via a Letting Agent or 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 on our webpages: www.swansea.ac.uk/accommodation/

Swansea University Family Accommodation
Swansea University provides a range of properties on 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 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

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.

Private Accommodation via 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.

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

- Dawsons Property - A local agency with properties in many locations in the area - **www.dawsonsproperty.co.uk**
- Belvoir! - A UK Wide chain with offices serving the Central Swansea area, as well as Sketty and Mumbles / Gower areas - **www.belvoir.co.uk/swansea**
- Bay - Independent agency specialising in properties around Swansea's Marina, SA1 and Mumbles areas - **www.bayestateagents.com**
- Peter Alan - Wales based agency with properties available across the country - **www.peteralan.co.uk**

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.

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 - University has no affiliation with, or control over, that Facebook group.

General information

Once you have signed a contract it is legally binding and you may not be able to break this without the Landlord's permission. 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

Temporary Accommodation

Due to the shortage of 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

We know that securing housing in the Swansea city area can be a challenging task, and that costs for properties have increased significantly in recent years.

While we understand that living close to campus is the ideal choice for many students, because of the limited availability of property in the Swansea area, this can be difficult to secure and quite expensive compared to living in another town a short distance away. Although this will likely mean some added cost or time for travel, this would usually be offset by savings in property prices.

Below you'll find the average rental cost of properties in Swansea and in three nearby towns - Neath, Port Talbot and Llanelli - based on Market Data analysis provided by www.home.co.uk in September 2025:

	Swansea	Neath	Port Talbot	Llanelli
One Bedroom	£753	£694	£575	£750
Two Bedrooms	£1071	£766	£936	£902
Three Bedrooms	£1.110	£938	£862	£907

As you can see, there is a potential to make significant savings by living a relatively short distance away.

Travel and Transport

Neath, Port Talbot and Llanelli are all within 12 miles and 30 minutes travel time of Swansea, with Neath and Port Talbot served by direct bus services to and from Bay Campus which take only around 20 minutes.

In addition, rail links from all three towns to Swansea are frequent and fast, again taking around 20 minutes and connecting to UniBws services at the bus stops outside Swansea station.

First Cymru Student Bus tickets cover routes between these towns and Swansea, and although it may take a little longer than the train, this means the cost of travel would be significantly reduced and comparable to living within Swansea.

Tickets can be bought for one-day, single term, academic year, or full year (including all holidays), along with a few other options. The current price (September 2023) for a full-year ticket is £440, giving unlimited travel for less than £40 a month.

Schools and Childcare
As we work closely with the local Schools Admissions team in Swansea, we do have bespoke guidance on school applications for this area.

We do not currently provide this level of guidance for areas outside of Swansea, but we are able to provide guidance and assistance if needed - although your first point of contact should be the Schools Team you are applying to.

Neath & Port Talbot: Both towns are part of the 'Neath Port Talbot' council area, so for these areas schools information and applications can be found at:

- Schools and Learning - Neath Port Talbot Council (npt.gov.uk)
- To make an application, head to School Admissions - Neath Port Talbot Council (npt.gov.uk) and select 'In Year Admissions'
- Contact details:
  - Email: admissions@npt.gov.uk
  - Phone: 01639 763580 / 01639 763730

Llanelli: Llanelli is within the Carmarthenshire County Council region, so for schools in this area applications should be made through that council:

- Education & Schools (gov.wales)
- For applications, School Admissions and Changing Schools (gov.wales)
- Contact details:
  - Email: admissions@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
  - Phone: 01267 234567