

Moving to York



Travelling to a new place to study is exciting—but it is completely natural to feel anxious and even frightened.

This resource is all about helping you understand your feelings and letting you know you're not alone!

Common problems that international students face are: Feeling homesick, problems integrating, language barriers, family worries, financial concerns, and culture shock.

We've asked current international and EU students to share their thoughts and experiences with you!

Read on to find out more...

Denise

Hello! I am currently in my third year of Philosophy, Politics and Economics here in York. I'm a full-blown 100% 'pai-kia' Singaporean through and through, which many find confusing when they first meet me and my animal jumpers from the children's section.

Before coming to York, I was certainly nervous and excited about my new-found freedom and independence. I could stay out as late as I wanted, but it also meant that I had to make my own breakfast in my sleep-deprived groggy state. Even so, York has been nothing short of great. The city is lively both in the day and at night, and the people I've had the pleasure of meeting have welcome me with open arms. York has given me a chance to do whatever I love so long as I have the time for it. I've picked up a new sport, and joined several interest groups, and had the chance to make so many new friends and meet people from all walks of life.

I think that new students need to know that going to University is like a fresh coat of paint on your old room: it's a chance for you to whitewash everything that would hold you back from doing what you want, and give yourself the freedom of expression and the freedom to choose what you want to paint your life with. Whether you choose to incorporate your old decor with your new paint job, or whether you choose to give it a complete redo, you can't ever forget the old layers of paint on that room, and you will always carry who you are with you to uni. University life is really what you make of it. It's difficult not to be afraid and scared of the future, but know that whatever coat of paint you pick for yourself, it's still you, and it's not too late to put another coat on anyway! :P



Jenny

刚刚来约克的时候我既紧张又兴奋。相信大多数人和我一样，将要发生的一切都是未知的。多认识了一些朋友之后就好多了，慢慢爱上了这里的生活，简直就是“为所欲为”。虽然考试作业压力还是有的，但是学校有相应的支持也就还好了。

I was excited and nervous when I first came to York. This city has a great reputation for its sightseeing attractions and academy. I felt less nervous when I met new friends through Fresh-er's Week and school clubs. Though studying can be stressful to me during exam and essay times, I still got support from school and friends around me. Generally I am happy with most of my time here.

I could not follow the lectures so my notes were just a bunch of words I managed to recall. I was very anxious about a lot of things. Even I am not sure about what to do between classes. I always ask myself with a lot of questions, such as, "Is it OK to eat now? Or do people usually eat later?" Or, "What time should I arrive at class? 10 minutes before? 5 minutes?"

The first month was the most difficult for me because I have to adapt to a very new situation in uni-versity, at the house, or even in the streets. I was very worried about my academic performance. I was not confident to join any student organization because I was worried that I will not have time to study. Then I talked to my fellow Indonesian friends who were also studying in the UK and we shared our worries. It turns out that I am not alone. Then I thought that it is normal to feel this way and the more important thing is to keep learning.

One year has passed, though it may seem so quick there were times that it felt very slow (the revision and exam period!). I am already used to the quietness of York now. I made new friends from different countries and it was a valuable experience to share stories with them. But the ultimate lesson is I learned so many things about myself. Studying abroad to some extent have changed me as a person, tested my limits sometimes, and in most times gave me new experiences.

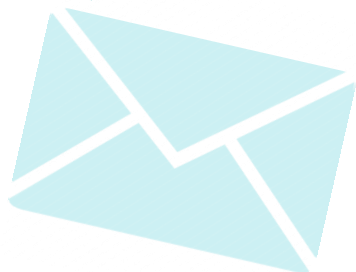
Now I am excited to be home soon but I will miss my life in York somehow.

Anggie

Hi, I came from Indonesia to study MSc Health Economics in University of York. This is my first experience of studying abroad. To study my masters' degree overseas has been my dream since I was in high school. I expected my one year in York will be similar to my under-graduate life.

Well, it turns out that York is smaller than I thought, and my neighbourhood is very quiet also. I could not sleep during my first week in my bedroom because of the silence. It felt very strange.

During my first week of classes, even more things surprised me. I can barely understand the words spoken by my tutors!



Rasha (GSA President)

I remember it as if it was yesterday, my first day at University of York;

An Egyptian female student arriving in the UK for the first time. The flight took almost five hours from Cairo. I can still recall how scared, anxious and worried I was. All sorts of negative thoughts kept coming to my head: what if UK streets have numbers, what if I got lost in the streets, whom shall I ask for help, whom can I trust to ask, what about the UK's policemen - are they nice (In my home town, I have a habit of avoiding them even though I've not done anything wrong... It is just how Egyptians are! :D)

My head was full of negative thoughts about the unknown, about almost everything related to my journey to study in the UK.

Rehashing these negative thoughts over and over did not help. So, I took a deep breath, and spent 20 minutes doing nothing but asking God for help. I did not want my journey to be easy, I did not want everything to work smoothly, I just asked for 'strength'. I was feeling weak and lost, so I simply asked for strength, nothing more, nothing less. I felt transformed after these 20 minutes. I found myself gradually focusing on the positive side of this journey to the 'unknown'. It was that I am simply achieving my dream. I am *the ambitious student arriving in Europe*. I left the plane feeling as if I was the queen of England - full of feelings of hope and confidence!

The minute I arrived to York, I discovered that none of my previous negative thoughts were true! Getting to the University from the station was super easy. People at York are extremely helpful, kind, and welcoming.

Today I am thankful of every obstacle I faced while completing my PhD degree. The challenges in my journey made me stronger, way much stronger than the day I arrived to York. In fact, in my first year I was focused only on my degree, nothing else. This was wrong, totally wrong, do not do it, please! Get to know other students in your department, and outside of it. Try to engage with departmental academic activities and extracurricular ones as well. I encourage you to seek a part-time job, even if you do not need money, just for the experience.

Now I am a new person, a much stronger, capable and problem solver (I think!). After spending years here at York, I consider it a home away from home. I love it. I really do.

If you need help you'll never be alone at York. We need each other, we really do. It is hard to be away from family, even if you think at the beginning of your journey that it's FUN leaving family and enjoy freedom. Building a support system of good friends, and other students, even of people outside the university from the local community is very important. And, do not forget your spirituality. Try something new, away from the academic routine.

And please remember that you should be proud. You really should be proud of yourself because you have made it all the way to York, one of the biggest Universities in the UK. Difficult times will pass and through the process, you will be able to touch upon many people's lives and the sense of achievement is really 'rewarding'.

You followed your dream.

Live your dream.

Kerstie

When I left my home, Hawaii, to study at York, it nearly took me 24 hours of travel to get there: 21 hours of airtime and 5 hours worth of layovers. Once I landed in York, I knew there was no turning back now and I needed to follow through with what I had decided to do. I had such an amazing opportunity to study Health Economics at the University of York.

It being my first time away from home, my parents made the trip with me. I stayed with them the first 3 nights before they helped me move into my very first dorm room. The first night I stayed in my room, I felt so alone, even though my parents were literally just a bus ride away. I had never been apart from my parents or my home in all of my 22 years alive. I was ashamed to admit to myself that I felt so scared to be on my own. My friends sent me emails and messages telling me to stay strong and to keep an open mind. When the time came, I couldn't help but cry saying goodbye to my parents. My first few nights in York, I stayed in my room trying to adjust to my new environment. I had never lived in a dorm before and to be honest, I prefer living at home (it's rent free and someone usually cooks my meals for me).

I realized I couldn't sit in my room and feel sorry for myself, so I emailed a friend I had made in class to get myself out there. He offered to show me around his residential college as we lived in different colleges. One of his flatmates happened to be in the same course I was. They made me feel right at home. We had lunch and we even went to a mixer together. Spending time with these wonderful friends I made changed everything for me. I was no longer sad about being alone and I was so grateful to have made a few friends in my new home.

Once the course began I was pleasantly surprised to know everyone in my course is so friendly! We all got chatting before class about anything and everything. My first term here took a lot of adjusting. At first, I didn't feel like I was in school, but as the spring term began, I felt a whole new me feeling the need to study. Although I must admit, it was really hard to spend the holidays here in my dorm room. As much as I desperately wanted to spend the holidays with my family back home, it was much too expensive for me to go home. Fortunately, my boyfriend was able to visit me for the entire break and we spent some time in London with one of the most amazing people I met at York. This was the first time I felt like I was really abroad. The opportunity to travel is amazing in itself. Since my first day here, I feel I have adjusted nicely to my new 'home'. I cherish every day there's sunshine and I now appreciate the one of a kind education I'm receiving while I'm here at York. I wouldn't change this experience for anything.

We hope that you've found this helpful Embrace your time here at York through the ups and downs of student life, so you can tell us about your own journey next year!

If you find yourself overwhelmed, visit our website for information about services that can help you.

www.mindyourheadyork.org

