

Essential Student Guide - Moving Into Halls

It's almost here, the day you've been waiting anxiously for since you started college – yes, you're about to embark on university life. But before you can move all of your belongings in and commence partying with your new buds, there are a few things to bear in mind. If you're the first member of your family to go to university, this guide will be especially useful in preparing you for moving into halls and getting your student life off to the best possible start.

Items to remember

You'll no doubt have a list as long as your arm for the items you need to take to university – and that's just the books you're expected to buy! In all seriousness, it is important that you remember to take various items – especially if your university is a long way from your parents' home. As this is likely to be the first time you've ever lived away from home, you may not really know what to take with you and what you should leave behind – remember that you'll also need to consider how you're getting to university; if you're getting public transport then you'll need to keep your suitcases to a minimum.

Here is a list of the items you absolutely definitely must take with you:

Documents

- Passport photos
- Passport/ driving licence
- NHS number
- National Insurance number
- Bank account details
- Doctor and dentist details
- Exam certificates

Studying

- Diary/ planner – to keep a note of your assignments and lectures
- Pad of lined paper to make notes
- Folders
- Pens, highlighters, stapler, hole punch, sticky labels, paper clips
- Post-it notes
- Blue tack (for putting up photos and posters)

Housekeeping

- Laundry bag (to keep dirty clothes in before you wash them)
- Clothes hangers (in case you're not supplied with any)
- Washing powder
- Iron and compact ironing board (not always supplied in halls)

Electrical

- Laptop/ tablet
- USB stick (for saving backup copies of important assignments/ presentations)
- Printer – you don't want to get stuck in long printing queues in the library minutes before your assignment is due

- Network cable – to access internet in your bedroom (check, some halls provide these for a small fee)
- Mobile phone and charger
- Headphones – you can play your music whenever you want and as loud as you want

Clothing

- T-shirts, jumpers, jeans, underwear, socks, trainers and shoes, swimwear, formal wear, party clothes

Bedding

- Sheets, duvet and covers, pillows and cases, hot water bottle, shower towels

Anything else, such as toiletries and food, are best bought once you've arrived in your new town. Just ask your parents to drop you off at the nearest supermarket, or better yet, see whether they can pay for the first "big shop" that you do – that should save you some money for your beer fund and keep your mum's worries about you not eating at bay.

Making your room feel more like home

There may be times when you feel a bit homesick, particularly on the first night in your new room. To help counteract this, you should take with you some keepsakes – this will make your room feel more homely and allows you to put your own personality into the room.

These items include:

- Posters – although you can get these cheaply in freshers' week
- Photos of friends and family
- Fairy lights, lava lamp – (check, some halls don't allow fairy lights or candles)
- Extra cushions and beanbags – so your new friends can sit down
- Teddies – trust me, everyone takes them
- Blankets – in case it gets chilly

How to stay safe

Without your parents there to remember to lock the doors before bed or to remind you to shut the windows before you leave for the day, staying safe can become a bit of an issue. So in addition to these two points, you may also want to consider taking out room insurance to protect your valuable possessions. You could also get your laptop marked for extra security – this means that in the event of it being stolen, it'll be easily tracked down again. Many universities offer this as a free service to students so it's worth checking it out.

Of course, there's also your personal safety to consider, which is vital when you're a university student. Surrounded by unlimited supplies of alcohol and no parents around can make it very tempting to get drunk on a regular basis. You should always drink responsibly, at the same time paying attention to your drinks when you're out. Never go back to an unattended drink, and always keep your thumb over the top of the bottle for extra safety. Similarly, have a plan for how you're getting home at the end of a night, and make sure you stick to it. Always let your friends know where you're going and who you're going with so that they are aware of your whereabouts.

Getting on with your housemates

Think of your housemates as your university family – you’ll be spending a lot of time with them over the coming months so it’s wise to make the best first impression possible. Maybe you could take a jar of sweets/ biscuits or some bottles of beer along with you so you can all enjoy them together on the first evening. It may sound a bit OTT but students are always in need of food and not many will turn down free alcohol.

There may be times when you disagree – this is completely normal; just think about how often you have arguments with your family members. The main thing to remember is that everything can be sorted out – sometimes you’ll have to give it time, and other times maybe you should be the first one to apologise. You’ll work out the best course of action along the way but try to keep the peace with everyone in the house where possible – you don’t need any extra tension or stress and a bad atmosphere can really make or break your university experience.

Avoiding messy house parties

Where possible, you should try to avoid throwing house parties for all of your university friends. Not only do they often involve far too much alcohol, there’s a good chance that items of furniture may get broken or damaged, or things may get stolen – if this happens, not only will you not receive your house deposit at the end of the year, but you’ll likely be asked to pay for any repairs, and as you know, students are not well-known for being the richest of folk.

I’m not saying you should cancel the parties altogether – maybe you could focus on enjoying the start of a great night out with your housemates and then meet up with the rest of the gang in a pub somewhere before heading out to party. That way, you’ll still have fun and your bank balance will remain healthy-ish.

Student guide provided by [Mansion Student](#)