

CARDIFF SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



PRE ARRIVAL GUIDE A-Level, GCSE

A students guide to help prepare you for studying at
Cardiff Sixth Form College and what to expect when you arrive.



Welcome to CSFC

Congratulations on getting a place at Cardiff Sixth Form College. We are sure that you will find your studies here rewarding and interesting, and we look forward to you joining us soon.



A move to a new city or country is daunting at any age. You are never quite sure what to expect and some aspects of living in Wales may seem very different at first. From when you arrive at the airport, our staff will be there to guide and support you during the transitional period.

"We hope that this Guide will help you in your preparations and also give you an idea of what to expect when you arrive."

The checklist

Pre-departure checklist:

- Check that your passport is valid and not about to expire
- Check whether you need a tuberculosis certificate.
- Prepare a short medical history. This will be helpful when you register with a doctor.

Pre-arrival Forms:

- Confirmation of Subject Choice
- Medical Questionnaire
- Guardian Agreement Form
- Airport Transfer Form
- Parental Level of English Form

Have you remembered:

- Original copies of documents as stated in your offer letter
- Passport
- Visa (if required)
- Air tickets
- Enrolment and Accommodation documents
- Take a photocopy of your passport (pages with your personal details and your visa page)

Immigration Advice/ Visa Information

1. EEA - Nationals

If you are a national of a country in the European Economic Area, you can enter the UK freely - you do not need to obtain entry clearance. You will be admitted by providing either a valid passport or national identity card.

2. Non-visa nationals

While you will not need a visa to come to the UK as a visitor or to do a short-term study course, you are required to apply for a visa if you are coming to the UK to study for more than six months.

3. Visa nationals

For long term full-time courses lasting over six months you must enter the UK on a student visa (Tier 4 child/Tier 4 general) and not a visitor's visa. For short term courses, lasting less than six months you must enter the UK on a Special Visitor Visa (Short-Term Study Visa)



Tuberculosis screening

Applicants for UK visas valid for longer than six months in certain countries require a certificate to show that they are free from infectious pulmonary tuberculosis (TB). The list of relevant countries is subject to change. This must be done in a UK Visas & Immigration approved medical centre. You can find full information about TB testing online: www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa

Biometric residence permit (BRP)

A Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) is a document issued by the Home Office to students as evidence of their immigration permission. They are the shape and size of a credit card and show your photograph on the front, together with information about how long your permission is valid for.

In the past, a student's Tier 4 visa was confirmed by a 'vignette' (a visa sticker) placed in the passport by the British Embassy/Consulate. The visa covered the entire length of their studies.

The **new process** means that students will now be granted temporary permission to enter the UK on the vignette in their passport.

The vignette will be valid for travel within 30 days of the proposed date of travel stated on the visa application. BRP needs to be collected within 10 days of your arrival to the UK and will confirm the full length of the visa. To make the process easier for our students, we have applied for an Alternative Collection Location code. This means that the BRP can be delivered to the College instead of a local post office.

For the BRP to be delivered to the College, you must make sure you provide the College's Alternative Collection Location (ACL code) during your visa application, in the section of the online form called "Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) Collection".

Our ACL code is **2FE257**

More information on BRP

<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/overview>

For more information on visas please refer to the official website.

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A-Level/GCSE

<https://www.gov.uk/child-study-visa>

<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa>

Short-term study

<https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa>

You should make your application as early as possible. However, you cannot apply more than three months before the start date of your course, as stated on your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). If you submit your application before that, it will be refused.

Tier 4 Visa. How to apply:

- Satisfy the conditions of your offer and obtain an unconditional offer to study at Cardiff Sixth Form College
If your offer is "conditional", this means we require further documentation from you. Your offer will state what the conditions are.
- Obtain a "Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies" CAS number .
- Check the visa process in your country of residence and the visa processing times
- Take the TB test and obtain TB certificate (if applicable)
- Check that you have enough money to meet the UKVI maintenance and tuition fee requirements
- Satisfy the Knowledge of English language requirement (Tier 4 General only) by passing the secure English Language Test (SELT)
<https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english> (if applicable).
- Complete the visa application online
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa>

Once the CAS has been set up, the College will email you with the details about you and your course that we have shared with UKVI. If there are any mistakes in the information, or your situation changes, including your passport number, it is your responsibility to notify us of these, so that your CAS can be changed and an updated version emailed to you before you apply.

If your parents or any other family member will be accompanying you to Cardiff for a few days to help you settle into your new life, they will need to obtain a visitor visa.

It is important that you understand your responsibilities as an international student and comply with the immigration regulations during your stay in the UK in order to protect your immigration status. The College also has responsibilities as your sponsor.

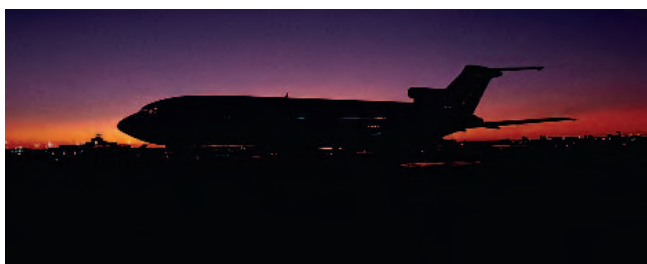


Arriving in the UK

Most of our international students arrive at Heathrow Airport, which is around 18 miles/29 km southwest of London.

Before landing

On your flight into the UK, you will be given a landing card shortly before arriving. This is a small form which requests details about your passport and your purpose of stay in the UK. You should complete the landing card before you reach passport control and immigration and give it to the officer at the desk.



At the airport - after landing

On leaving the aircraft, follow the signs for arrivals to go through passport control, baggage reclaim and Customs.

Passport control

The Immigration Officer will want to see that your documents are in order, that your passport is up-to-date, check your landing card and visa. Also have evidence of financial support, your offer letter and your accommodation details ready for inspection. Part of the immigration process may, if required, include evidence of a recent medical examination or international vaccination certificate.

Transfer

Please refer to your Pre-Arrival forms as to the exact time and date of pick-up. If you arrive outside of these times and dates you will be expected to meet the cost.

A Cardiff Sixth Form College representative will be waiting for you in the airport Arrival Halls, holding a Cardiff Sixth Form College sign. If you cannot find the representative, go to the airport information desk and ask the staff to make an announcement, giving your name and the name of the school (Cardiff Sixth Form College). Alternatively, ask the information desk to call the college's telephone number (+442920 493121) and someone will help you.

Finalising your immigration procedure

Police registration

Please check your visa, which will stipulate whether or not this is a requirement. If so, you must register with the Police within seven days of your arrival in the UK. This is a legal immigration requirement of your permission to remain in the UK. The College will arrange to take students to the local police station as part of the induction week.

Accommodation

Any change from living at home will take a while to get used to, and it will take time to adjust to your new surroundings. We hope you view the change as an exciting stage in your life, and we are confident that we can provide you with accommodation where you will feel secure and happy.



Our accommodation is divided into flats. Each flat has four to five en-suite study bedrooms plus a shared kitchen and bathroom. All bedding is provided. The halls have 24 hour security and CCTV cameras are in operation, and monitored by the off-site security personnel.

Cardiff Sixth Form College provides full catering with three meals a day served seven days a week during term time and during half term. **Please note that College and accommodation will be closed during the Christmas break.** The College is experienced in catering for a large number of students from a wide variety of cultures and, in addition, accommodates individual special dietary requirements including halal, vegetarian and allergy specific. To ensure that all tastes are catered for the menus are varied, and a choice is always available. Cardiff Sixth Form College employs professional chefs, and students can choose from a wide variety of options.



Induction Programme

We understand that arriving in a new place is a challenging and exciting experience for you. At Cardiff Sixth Form College, we take great care to help you to settle into your new way of life by offering:

- **Social events**, including trips to areas of local interest, to help you get to know your fellow students and as part of your cultural enrichment programme.
- **Introduction to all staff members** – both academic and pastoral.
- **Introduction to college facilities**, such as the computer suite and library. We will also arrange for you to register with Cardiff Central Library.
- **Introduction to the College's sporting facilities** – remember to bring your own equipment with you, such as racquets.
- **Individual advice on personal health services in Cardiff** such as medical and dental treatment. The College will arrange for the students to register with a GP (General Practitioner)
- **Advice given on use of local public transport.**
- **Individual sessions at Registration to discuss College policy and requirements.** These sessions consist of: enrolment, an introduction to the A-Level programme and tips on how to get the most from the college. You must remember to bring the ORIGINAL documents required, as stated in your offer letter.



Living in the UK

Money

Students can open bank accounts at any of the major banks and all have several branches in Cardiff. The College will assist students in setting up accounts.



When planning your personal budget you need to take into account any extras that may arise, such as any equipment needed to participate in extra-curricular activities plus the cost of coach travel for college trips.

While the college tries to keep additional costs to a minimum, students need to be aware that they are required to contribute. The currency in the UK is the Pound (£) and pence (p). These are available in notes of £5, £10, £20 and £50. Any amounts smaller than £5 come in coin form. These are £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p, and 1p.

Medical care

If you are coming to the UK for more than six months, you will need to pay a healthcare surcharge (called the 'immigration health surcharge') as part of your immigration application. You'll then be able to use the National Health Service (NHS). You should bring your biometric residence permit with you when you access healthcare in the UK.

"You are not entitled to free NHS treatment for illnesses that existed before you arrived in the UK or anything that happened on the way to the UK. You may also choose to purchase a medical insurance policy that gives access to private medical care."

This facility is not currently integrated in the online system and is processed via IHS portal.

If you are coming for less than six months (short-term programmes) you are not entitled to free National Health Service (NHS) treatment. You should make sure you have adequate medical insurance to cover medical costs if you fall ill and also to cover additional possible costs resulting from illness.

The College will register each student with a GP during the induction week.

Routine dental treatment is provided free of charge through the NHS, but this does not include cosmetic (orthodontic) treatment or more advanced surgery.



Cardiff

Cardiff's great cultural diversity and unique heritage makes it a fantastic city to live and study. As the capital of Wales, it has a large choice of social and leisure activities. It is renowned for being vibrant and friendly and easy to get around.

Public Transport

Local

Cardiff is a small and compact capital city, with a population of approximately 340,000 people. It has reliable and reasonably priced bus and train services. The main bus terminal and central train station are adjacent to each other in the city centre, and about a 20 minute walk from the College. A one way journey from the outskirts of the city to the city centre would cost approximately £2 on a local bus.

The cheapest option for students is to obtain a Railcard and a bus pass, so remember to budget for these!

None of the local buses give change so you need to make sure that you always have the correct money. An alternate payment method now available on Cardiff Buses is the 'iff Card'. This electronic card is similar to a London 'Oyster' card and allows travellers to make cashless payments on all Cardiff Bus services. You can top up these cards either on the bus or at the Cardiff Bus central office. More information about this is available on the Cardiff Bus website. Taxis are available, but are, inevitably, more expensive than the bus or train.

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National

Cardiff is centrally placed in the UK, with London being approximately 2.5 hours by train. Cities are linked by either a coach service (National Express) or train

(British Rail). The coach tends to be much slower than the train, but is also much less expensive – it can cost as little as £12 return to travel to London if booked far enough in advance. With a Student Railcard, a return train ticket between Cardiff and London would be in the region of £40 -£50.

Cardiff Airport is approximately 40 minutes by bus from the city centre, with the nearest international Airport being London Heathrow. London is also the home of all international embassies.



Shopping, Food and Eating Out

You will be spoilt for choice if you want to eat out in Cardiff, as all tastes and cuisines are catered for. Cardiff has plenty of restaurants, cafes and coffee shops, many to be found in the roads adjacent to the College. There is also a choice of reasonably priced “international” supermarkets where you may find goods that are familiar to you.

Halal Food stores

- **ZemZem Continental Market Halal Food Specialist**
12 – 14 Wyverne Road, Cathays, Cardiff, CF24 4BH (Arabic, Asian, African and Mediterranean Foods).
- **Clare Food Stores**
45 – 57 Clare Road, Grangetown, Cardiff, CF11 6QP (basic food and grocery items some of which are imported from Asia).
- **Albany Halal Food Store**
51 Donald Street, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 4TL
- **Majid Food Store**
Clare Street, Riverside, CF11 6BB (Asian food, Halal meats).
- **Shop Right**
28-30 City Road, Roath, Cardiff (Asian food, Halal butchers).
- **Continental Delicatessen**
160 -162 City Road, Cardiff (Halal meats, Middle Eastern, Turkish and Iranian products).

Chinese & Eastern Foods

- **China Supermarket**
32 – 34 Tudor Street, Cardiff, CF11 6AH.
- **Cardiff Korean & Japanese Foods**
116 Woodville Road, Cathays, Cardiff, CF24 4EE.

African Food Store

- **Xquisite Africa**
148 City Road, Roath, Cardiff (range of products including frozen fish and meats, dry and fresh foods, hair products, clothing and fabrics).



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Religion and Faith

In the UK there is freedom to follow any religion and any faith and there are good relationships between the major religions.

Weather

British weather changes a lot throughout the year. In summer (June to August) temperatures can reach 25–30° C, whilst in the winter it can drop to around 5°C during the day and there is usually some snowfall in January or February.

Electrical equipment

Electricity in Britain is supplied on 240volts/50Hz cycles. You should ensure that any electrical appliance you intend to bring with you will work safely on this voltage, and bring adapters to help convert the voltage when necessary.

Be Safe and Legal

UK laws may vary greatly from those of your own country, and it's important to be aware of what is, and what is not, allowed.

- **It is illegal to buy alcohol under the age of 18.** You would be breaking the law by even attempting to buy it. It is illegal to provide alcohol to minors.
- **Drugs (including cannabis and LSD) are illegal** in the UK. The police can stop and search you if they have any reason to suspect you are carrying drugs.
- **Dropping rubbish in the street is illegal** and you can be cautioned and/or charged. On the spot fines of £50 are now in force.

Cardiff is a safe city, but like anywhere else you have to be sensible. Most students enjoy a positive and rewarding experience during their stay in Cardiff. The suggestions that follow are intended to advise, not to alarm. Much of the advice is common sense, but it can make a real difference.



For your general safety, it is worth noting the following:

- Traffic travels on the LEFT in Britain.
- If you go out alone make sure someone knows where you are going.
- If using a taxi, try and pre-book with a reputable taxi firm. Their licence is yellow and should be displayed at the back of the taxi.
- Do not carry important documents or too much money with you – be aware of security.
- Be considerate to others by not making too much noise.
- Expect to spend time queuing – it is polite and usual to queue for buses, taxis and even in shops.
- Be polite in your dealings with other people – there is no excuse for rudeness to anyone.
- Breach of Curfew: Students must ask permission to break curfew, and fill in the appropriate form.

Work Experience

Cardiff Sixth Form College is very proud of the comprehensive and valuable work experience and volunteering opportunities it offers its students. Our Work Experience Coordinator is able to arrange experience opportunities across a range of careers disciplines, including: GP surgeries, veterinary practises, professional firms in banking, law and engineering. These experiences are designed to give students a better understanding of their chosen careers and are vital for their University applications. Work experience placements are normally arranged over the **November** and **February** half-terms and are also possible in **June** after the exams.

"If you wish to leave the UK during term time you must seek permission from the College. As a general rule the College does **NOT** allow students to leave during term time, and will only allow this in exceptional circumstances."

In an emergency

In an emergency where there is a danger to life or a crime is in progress you can contact the police, fire brigade or ambulance by dialing 999 from any telephone. This call is free of charge but should be used only in an emergency.

Information for Parents

Parents no longer need to wait for termly reports to obtain information about their child. Using the 'Parent Portal' they can view up-to-date information whenever they wish, and from wherever they are. 'Parent Portal' is a portal which enables parents to view their child's academic performance in real-time, via a web browser. This facility allows exclusive access to the child's attendance, test scores and class data whenever the parent/carer wishes. As well as student performance data, the portal also provides general useful information about the college, including the academic calendar and announcements. Through this, parents can take a more pro-active role in the development of their child's education, even from hundreds of miles away.