

INTO Pre-Departure Briefing – Handout

Dear Students and Parents,

International students remember their study abroad years as the happiest and most rewarding experience of their lives. But it is also very challenging.

Advice for Students: What You Can Do Now

1) Pre-Departure Guides (Joining Instructions)

We have lots of experience teaching and caring for international students. INTO's Pre-Departure Guides are designed to help you. They are also translated into Chinese for your benefit. Please read these carefully. There is no excuse for you not to spend one hour reading them.

2) Book Your Accommodation Now!

If you want a student residence, make sure you have paid full fees 4 weeks prior to course start. The INTO Centres are very popular. Every year, we have more arrivals than residences. If residences have run out, however, we can organise homestays or help you seek private rental accommodation on your arrival.

3) Arrival Details Form

We need you to complete your Arrival Details Form and submit it before arrival, even if you do not need an airport transfer. We want to ensure staff are present to help you on arrival, especially on weekends, after business hours, or during holidays when staff are away. Buildings are locked and rooms need to be cleaned. Staff need to know you have arrived safely.

4) Money and Budgeting

In China, you are accustomed to using cash and carrying very large sums of money. Credit card use is not common. In the UK, do not carry lots of cash. It is easy to lose and it is unsafe. INTO will advise you on how to apply for a bank account after arrival, but this will take a few weeks to process. Some UK universities advise preparing GBP650-780 per month for living costs. If you budget GBP800 per month for living expenses, this will allow you to spend at least GBP25 per day, which is reasonable for a student.

5) Arriving at the Airport

Airport Immigration Officers will ask you what you are doing in the UK. Do not be nervous. Speak truthfully about your studies. Bring your Offer and Visa Letter with you in your hand luggage, in case you need to provide proof. If you have booked an INTO airport transfer, your driver will be holding a sign with your name on it. If you cannot see your driver at first, do not panic. INTO will provide you with the telephone number of the taxi company. Please call it to see where the driver is. INTO will also provide an emergency 24/7 number that you can call if you have any problems. INTO gives you a GBP5 telephone card when sending your Visa Letter. Be thoughtful of your parents, who will worry about you. Call your parents immediately after arriving in the UK to let them know you are safe and well.

Advice for Parents: When Your Child is in the UK

1) Parent Interviews

Help us manage and care for your child together. Attend INTO's annual Parent Interviews in China, usually held in March. We organise academic staff to see you in China's major cities, Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. Hear the truth about your child's grades, attendance and conduct. Make sure your child is working hard!

2) Living on Campus

Help us keep your child safe and focussed on his or her studies. We strongly advise that students live in residences. This means they are close to class and have access to the university's excellent facilities. Campus staff can assist the student. They can eat in the university cafeterias, instead of spending time buying groceries and cooking. Private accommodation may look cheaper initially, but you have to factor in extra costs like utilities and transportation. If students wish to move out of residences, they need to submit a formal, written request, giving at least one term of notice. If students move out without one term's notice, they will be charged for that term, as the university will be holding an empty room.

3) Budgeting

Help your child develop responsible budgeting skills. Sending students lots of money is distracting and leads to wasteful purchases. There is no reason why students need to buy cars. Young students have been known to drive recklessly, without licence, registration and insurance. Once tuition and accommodation is paid, living expenses of GBP800 a month is comfortable, without being extravagant. You can make monthly Telegraphic Transfers to your child once he or she has set up a UK bank account.

4) Independent Living Skills

Help your child develop independent living skills. Your child will be accustomed to calling you for every imaginable problem, important and trivial. This is because you did everything for your child in China. Your child's continued reliance on you, even while abroad, stunts the development of his or her maturity. University teaching and administrative staff can, and will, help students. Chinese students are often shy and scared to approach staff. Encourage your child to be less dependent on you and to seek help from university staff around them. Help your child on the path to becoming a true adult

I hope this has helped prepare you for living and studying in the UK. My best wishes to you for continued success in your studies. Have a happy and rewarding experience abroad!

Best wishes,

INTO (China, Hong Kong and Macau)
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