

# Self help matters.

Helping you to find your solutions

## Studying in the UK

International Students  
and Homesickness

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## International Students and Homesickness

Studying in a different country can be a great opportunity but is also a major transition that may present difficulties as well. You may feel very excited about coming here but might not be prepared for how stressful adjusting to a new culture can be. You may be coping with a new language, people you do not know, unusual food, new money, a different approach to education and a climate that may seem very weird. And wet.

There will be many UK students who have left home for the first time who experience homesickness. You may not only have left home for the first time, but also your country and culture.

Stepping into a different culture can be very challenging where the rules are different, taken for granted and not explained. This can result in feelings of uncertainty and loss of confidence.

Visitors often experience a “honeymoon” period where everything seems wonderful and exciting. This may be followed by an experience of “culture shock” when you might feel bewildered, frustrated, lonely, homesick and lost. You may have desired more independence but now feel there is too much freedom and not enough direction and guidance.

When the time comes to leave you will be anticipating your return: this can result in a reverse culture shock and a feeling of loss for the things that you have come to value in Scotland.

## Top Tips

**Normal.** Accept that your feelings are normal and natural responses to the big transition you are dealing with.

**Kindness.** Avoid being hard on yourself. Be kind to yourself and realize that forming new relationships takes time.

**Solutions.** Think of solutions you have achieved in the past and consider whether you can apply these here?

**Similar.** Others will also be experiencing the feelings that you are, so talking to others may be helpful and ease the loneliness. Even UK students who are familiar with the culture may share some of your feelings if they are away from home for the first time.

**Adjust.** Familiarise yourself with British and Scottish culture by reading newspapers, watching TV, catching up with social media and talking to others.

**Ask** questions when you don't understand something and don't be afraid to ask for help. Most people will be happy to help you.

**Meeting up** and spending time with others from your own culture can help you to reduce your feelings of isolation. You can cook familiar food together and talk about home, but do try to keep a balance. You may adjust more quickly if you find new people and activities that you enjoy that make you feel part of the life of the university and city.

**Be open** to the differences you encounter and enjoy the rich variety of social and cultural experiences that Scotland can offer.

**Contact** with your family and friends back home can help you to settle and arranging special times for phone calls can help cut down bills.

If things don't seem to be improving and low mood, anxiety or feelings of isolation persist, take them seriously and make an appointment to see a counsellor at the Student Counselling Service, one of the Chaplains at the Multi-Faith Centre, a Student Advisor in the Student Advice and Support Office or your GP.

## Resources

### MOODZONE

Boost your mood, cope with stress, anxiety or depression or simply improve your overall emotional wellbeing.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx)

### LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.livinglifetothefull.com](http://www.livinglifetothefull.com)

### THE MIX

Provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

### MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



**Opening Hours:** Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

### UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



[www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support)

### BIG WHITE WALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.bigwhitewall.com](http://www.bigwhitewall.com)

#### If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - [www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling)