



# Supporting the transition into university life



**A student  
guide**

# Contents

Starting University is an exciting time, but it can come with some challenges. This guide helps you familiarise yourself with support available on campus, as well as some handy hints and tips to give you a head start and an idea of what to expect.

## Disability and mental health support 4 - 10

Disability	4 - 5
Mental health support	6
Meet our mental health and autism team	7
Tips on managing anxiety on campus	8
Quiet spaces on campus	9
Apps to support your mental health and wellbeing	9
Exercise as a strategy	10

## Adapting to independent living 11 - 15

Establish a new routine	11 - 12
Shopping guide	13
Hints and tips on daily living tasks	14
Living in University accommodation	14
Budgeting and finances	15

## What to expect in a classroom 16 - 20

Lectures	16
Seminars and practical sessions	17
Tips for managing group work	18
Timetables	19
Using the Library	20

## Who to contact guide 21 - 23



# Disability and mental health support

## Disability

If you feel like you might need some support with your studies, you can register with Disability Services. You are given a named adviser who talks to you about your needs and which areas you might need support with. A Student Support Plan is produced and circulated to relevant members of staff so that they know how best to support you.

### Find out more:

[tees.ac.uk/sections/stud/disability](https://tees.ac.uk/sections/stud/disability)

You can also apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) every year, which could entitle you to additional specialist support which may include: specialist equipment, software or one-to-one support such as mentoring or study skills tuition.

### Find out more:

[gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/how-to-claim](https://gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/how-to-claim)

If you are eligible for a DSA, you can book a Study Needs Assessment. Your assessor makes recommendations to your funding body about your support needs. Following this you receive a letter from your funding body confirming your entitlement. If you need some help with this process you can contact your Disability Adviser.

### Email:

[studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)



## Tip

Register early so we can get your support set up ready for when you start.

## More about DSA-funded specialist mentoring

You might find one-to-one mentoring useful to support you in areas such as:

- > anxiety and stress management
- > avoidance/procrastination
- > concentration and memory
- > general approach to university
- > maintaining a healthy work/life balance
- > mood and motivation
- > perfectionism
- > presentations and group work
- > self-esteem and assertiveness
- > social interactions and communication
- > time management and organisation.



## Meet one of our mentors



'Hi, I'm Gill Gott. I'm a mentor at Teesside University and I specialise in working with autistic students.

A mentor can help you explore the effects of your condition on your studies and develop appropriate practical and academic support strategies to enable you to enjoy an independent university experience. The support is built around your individual needs

and could range from developing good time management skills, action lists for assignment planning, to coping strategies in stressful or anxiety-related situations. With your mentor you set goals and regularly review your progress to help you keep on track with your objectives.'

For more about specialist mentoring, [find out more.](#)

## Mental health support

We have a team of specialist advisers who are dedicated to supporting students with autism spectrum conditions and mental health conditions – they are based on the top floor of Student Life. This is a confidential service to help with:

- > setting up your disability support
- > advice and support with concerns /anxieties during your time at university
- > settling in and adjusting to the demands of university life
- > liaising with your academic School if there are any course-related issues
- > exploring services within and outside of the university to help enhance your experience of university life and to help support you with your mental health and wellbeing
- > referring you to our counselling service if you require some additional support.

**Find out more.**



## Meet our mental health and autism team



**Lindsay While**  
Assistant Director  
(Student Wellbeing  
& Welfare)



**Molly Armstrong**  
Mental Health  
Practitioner



**Demi Falshaw**  
Student Adviser:  
Mental Health  
and Autism



**Ellis Ford**  
Student Adviser:  
Mental Health  
and Autism



**Lizzie Brown**  
Student Adviser:  
Mental Health  
and Autism



**Helen Myrie**  
Student Adviser:  
Mental Health  
and Autism

Contact a member of the team: [studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)

## Tips on managing anxiety on campus

With university life there are lots of new people and settings which can be overwhelming at times. There are coping strategies you can use to help support you during your time at university:

- > practice relaxation techniques
- > practice breathing exercises
- > plan ahead and create a routine
- > prepare for your classes
- > plan alternative quieter routes to get you from a to b
- > familiarise yourself with the campus and carry a copy of the campus map
- > do a trial run to classrooms when you get your timetable
- > take a packed lunch or decide where you are going to buy your lunch in advance. eat and keep hydrated throughout the day
- > wear headphones so you can listen to your favourite music or wear noise cancelling headphones
- > go to a safe/quiet place where you can manage your feelings and relax
- > agree with a family member or friend that you can call them if you're feeling anxious
- > use an app on your phone.

Keeping a note of what makes you anxious is also valuable. Look back at your feelings over a day, week or month to gain insight into places or instances that are causing you particular difficulty. This helps you to create new coping strategies as well as reflect on situations you have managed well.

Mental health services at the university can also offer support for students to expand on their coping strategies and help you learn new ones.

**Speak to your adviser if you would like further information or email [studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)**



## Quiet spaces on campus

If you find that you need a moment to take a break, the following areas tend to be the quietest around campus:

- > Reflection room, Waterhouse
- > First floor seating area, Europa
- > Ground floor seating area, Greig (car park entrance)
- > Bookable spaces in the Library
- > Seating areas in The Curve



## Apps to support your mental health and wellbeing

Search the app store on your smartphone or tablet:

**SAM: Self-help for Anxiety Management**  
Support for learning to manage your anxiety.

**Mindshift**  
Relaxation skills and strategies to manage anxiety.

**Stay Alive**  
Suicide prevention for people with thoughts of suicide and those who have concerns about someone else.

**Headspace**  
Help with sleep and stress through meditation.

**Insight**  
Meditation and mindfulness.

**My Possible Self**  
Monitoring and tracking your emotional health.

**Fabulous: Self-Care**  
Build good habits and a healthy lifestyle.

**Brain in hand**  
Helping people make decisions, manage anxiety, and deal with unexpected situations. This can potentially be funded through your DSA application. Speak to your adviser or visit [braininhand.co.uk](http://braininhand.co.uk).

**For further information about support and managing mental health, visit [Mental health support](#).**

## Exercise as a strategy

As well as the clubs and societies in the **Students' Union** such as swimming and football, the University also have their own gym and fitness classes. **Find out more.**

If you would like to join the gym you can speak to a member of staff to find out when the quieter times might be. There is always a member of staff available in the gym if you ever need any support.

For more information, email [studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)



## Adapting to independent living

If you have moved away from home, this could feel quite daunting at first. We want to make sure that you get a head start and have the information you need to start to live independently and enjoy your university experience.



### 1 Establish a new routine

It's ok not to do everything on your to-do list, just move it to another day.

To move towards a new routine, you could think about how structured you like your time to be. You could create a daily/weekly timetable including specific times you would like to complete certain tasks, including classes, or think about having a general plan and perhaps have a to-do list to help you remember what you need to do that day or week. Think about what might work best for you:

#### Example one:

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Weekly to-do list:
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

## Example two:

Day	9.00am 10.00am	10.00am 11.00am	11.00am 12.00pm	12.00pm 1.00pm	1.00pm 2.00pm	2.00pm 3.00pm	3.00pm 4.00pm	4.00pm 5.00pm	5.00pm onward
Monday									
Tuesday									
Wednesday									
Thursday									
Friday									
Saturday									
Sunday									
Weekly to-do list:									



## Tip

Get the task that you least want to do out of the way first so that it is not looming over you for the rest of the day. Prepare for the next day the night before so that you have less to do first thing in the morning.

## 2 Shopping guide

- > Think about what you like to eat and pre-plan some recipes at home and write a shopping list based on the recipes. You can then decide what items will be within your weekly budget.
- > Do a supermarket shop before you arrive at your accommodation, so you don't have to think about it during your first week on campus.
- > Make a big batch of food and freeze it in containers, so that you can easily heat it up another day for a quick meal if you have a busy day.

### Nearby shops

<b>Aldi</b>	Newport Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 5JF
<b>Lidl</b>	Newport Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 5PR
<b>Sainsbury's</b>	Wilson Street, Middlesbrough, TS1 1RP
<b>Iceland</b>	The Cleveland Centre, Middlesbrough, TS1 2NR
<b>Students' Union shop</b>	although you may not be able to do your full shop here, it's great for essentials and treats.

There are also other smaller convenience stores near campus on Linthorpe Road and in the town centre.

### Essential shopping list:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - Baked beans   | - Salt/condiments                                   |
| - Bin bags  | - Stationery  |
| - Bread   | - Tea/coffee/other drinks                           |
| - Butter  | - Toiletries and bathroom essentials such as towels |
| - Cleaning essentials   | - Toilet roll                                       |
| - Instant noodles   | - Washing powder                                    |
| - Milk  | - Washing up liquid                                 |
| - Pasta   |   |
| - Pasta sauces  |   |
| - Other kitchen essentials such as cheese grater, pans, plates - check with the Accommodation Team to see what is already provided. |   |

### 3 Hints and tips on daily living tasks

- > Practice at home first with family or friends – washing clothes, making the bed, cooking, cleaning.
- > Arrive early to your accommodation to familiarise yourself with the set up and to see how the washing machine, cooker, microwave work.
- > Contact the Accommodation team to find out about how the washing facilities work – some of our accommodation have washing facilities in the kitchens however some have laundry rooms where you will need to buy a card from the Accommodation team. [accommodation@tees.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@tees.ac.uk).
- > Familiarise yourself with routes to places you might regularly use such as the supermarket or nearest convenience shop.

## Living in university accommodation and making friends

> Think about how you will introduce yourself to your housemates in a way you feel comfortable. You could talk to them about:

- > your interests, they may have the same interests as you
- > which course they are studying and what made them choose their course
- > where they have moved from and how they are getting on with their unpacking
- > whether they know the area. if they do, you could ask them to help you find your way around. if they don't, you could suggest going for a walk around campus together, or to find the nearest shops
- > sharing tasks, such as cooking or cleaning and put a schedule together.

- > Look on the **Students' Union website** and see if there are any clubs or societies that match your interests. You can do something you enjoy and also meet people with the same interests as you. If you have a particular interest which is not a club or society yet, why not start your own.
- > View the Social Events Calendar on the Students' Union website where you can see upcoming events, especially during Freshers' Week.
- > If you want to discuss support for joining or attending a club or society, please speak to your Disability Adviser.

## Budgeting and finances

If you need support with managing your money, our finance team recommend the following websites:

**Monday Advice Service**

**The Complete University Guide**

To help you manage your money, you might want to think about a budgeting planner to keep track of money coming in and your spending. Here is an example that you can adapt:

Income	£	Expenses	£
Maintenance loan		Accommodation	
Paid work		Mobile phone / wifi	
Savings		Utility bills (gas, electric, water)	
Grant or bursary		Food/household shopping	
Help from parents		Course materials	
		Leisure activities	
		Travel	
<b>Total income each month</b>		<b>Total costs each month</b>	

### Blackbullion

The University have partnered with **Blackbullion**

Register to access a wide range of resources and information and develop your confidence to manage your finances.

You can make an appointment to see one of our financial advisers. They can help you with:

- > advice on tuition fees, student loans, benefits and welfare
- > tips on managing money and budgeting
- > support with financial hardship.

To make an appointment with our finance team, email [studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)

# What to expect in a classroom

Your timetable is made up of lectures, seminars and practical sessions in labs or studios.

## Lectures

You might expect to be in lecture for one to two hours while your lecturer talks about a particular subject. You might find that there is a large number of students, but there are usually a lot of seats so you can choose where to sit.

You usually have access to the presentation slides but you also might want to take some extra notes which aren't on the slides:

- > by handwriting
- > on your University iPad or your laptop

- > recording the information on your University iPad, your phone, or using DSA-funded equipment if you have been awarded this. Recording lectures means you can listen back to information at a later time at your own pace.

Please see our [website](#) for more information on recording lectures. If there is something you don't understand, you can usually talk to the lecturer afterwards or email them.

## Tip

**You might want to think about where is best for you to sit and do a trial run. If you are feeling a little anxious, think about:**

- > sitting at the back where you can see everyone
- > sitting at the end of a row near to a door so that you can leave if you need to
- > taking a short break outside the room if you need to manage any anxiety
- > getting there early so you have plenty of choice.

## Seminars and practical sessions

You can expect these classes to be a little more interactive but with less students. There might be some class discussions or group work, or you might be asked to complete a task within the time you are in the class.

## Tips

- > **Write down any instructions so you remember what you need to do.**
- > **Prepare by checking blackboard first to see what tasks might be included in the class.**
- > **Approach your tutor for clarification if you don't understand something or ask to speak to them one-to-one if you feel uncomfortable around others.**
- > **Use this time to meet people and introduce yourself as everyone is new to each other at the beginning – you could start a conversation by talking about the task you have been given, or how they are finding university.**

**Register with Disability Services if you feel you need reasonable adjustments to support you.**



## Tips for managing group work

It can feel quite overwhelming to work in a group with people that you are getting to know. Here are some useful tips to give you a head start:

- > use your strengths – offer to do the tasks which show off your talents
- > suggest using apps or a group chat to communicate rather than face-to-face
- > focus on the best piece of work that you can do, rather than worrying about what others are doing
- > prepare for meetings with bullet points to help you remember what you want to say
- > find someone you feel most comfortable with in the group and try to get to know them, rather than thinking about the whole group
- > if you can, tell one of the group members that you are nervous
- > practice social skills and feeling confident – you can work with one of our mental health advisers, or with a mentor.



## Timetables

### Example of a timetable and how to read it

<b>Week No:</b>	<b>S1/10</b> <b>(25/11/2019)</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Lecture</b>
	<b>PCI1041-N</b> <b>T1.10</b> <b>Beveridge, Peter</b> <b>9:00am - 10:00am</b>
	<b>Science Lab</b>
	<b>PCI1041-N</b> <b>Crime Scene House 3</b> <b>James, Tim</b> <b>10:00am - 12:00pm</b>

This shows the semester, the week and also the date of the commencing week.

This shows if your session is a lecture, seminar or a lab session (see blue example below).

This is the building, floor and room number your session is being held in. For example:  
> T is the The Curve (please see [The Campus Map](#) for each building letter).  
> 1 is floor 1.  
> 10 is the room number.  
> So floor 1, room 10 in The Curve.

This is your module code which is also available on Blackboard. This is to make sure you know which module the session will be about.

Module leader

The start and finish time.

There are blank slots in your timetable for independent study. You can refer to each module guide for information about how much time is recommended to spend on the module. You could create a study timetable which helps to incorporate independent study into your blank spaces.

It is possible that there could be a sudden change to a lecture time or location. To help you feel prepared you can plan ahead by checking emails and Blackboard regularly to check for changes in advance. If you are unsure about where the new room is, there will be staff available at the School reception to help.

If you do find that you are in a situation where you are finding it difficult to cope, you can come to Student Life and tell the reception team that you need some support.

## Using the Library

There are bookable study spaces available.

There is a self-service station on the ground floor for you to borrow books and a café if you need a break.



There is a team available on the ground floor if you have any questions about how to use the Library or how to find resources.

The **Learning Hub** provides resources to support you with developing skills, online learning, tutorials, workshops and peer support (PASS). There are resources for areas such as: essay writing, researching, referencing, note taking, time management and presentation skills.



## Who to contact guide

### Module leader

Contact your module leader if you have any concerns about your course or academic work, including requesting an extension. You can find the name of your module leader in the module guides on Blackboard.

### Personal tutor

Your personal tutor offers you support if you are experiencing any difficulties on your course. They can help with your transition into and progression through university. They can also support you with any welfare or wellbeing queries and ensure that you are referred to the most appropriate service if needed.

### Student support officer

There is a student support officer assigned to each School. Their role is to support students through difficulties, which may impact on their studies and time at university. They explore your academic options to facilitate your continued study and initiate contact with tutors as required. They also work together with you to consider additional support from departments and services across the university. To find out who your support officer is, contact your disability adviser or email [studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)

### Disability coordinator

There is a disability coordinator in every School. They offer you advice and support if you are completing a work-based or practice placement. They also liaise with placements to make them aware of your needs with your consent. If you have a Student Support Plan, the disability coordinator supports you with making sure that your academic teaching staff are aware of how best to support you. Contact information:

- > MIMA School of Art & Design:  
[msad-support@tees.ac.uk](mailto:msad-support@tees.ac.uk)
- > School of Computing, Engineering & Digital Technologies:  
[scedtdisability@tees.ac.uk](mailto:scedtdisability@tees.ac.uk)
- > School of Health & Life Sciences:  
[shls-disability@tees.ac.uk](mailto:shls-disability@tees.ac.uk)
- > School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Law:  
[ssshlstudentdisability@tees.ac.uk](mailto:ssshlstudentdisability@tees.ac.uk)
- > Teesside University Business School:  
[tubsstudentdisability@tees.ac.uk](mailto:tubsstudentdisability@tees.ac.uk)

## Disability adviser

Your disability adviser works with you to create and review your Student Support Plan and put reasonable adjustments in place based on your needs. You have a disability adviser for the duration of your course. They also facilitate referrals into internal and external services if needed and other departments within the university, such as your academic teaching staff. Email: [studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)

## Study needs assessor

Within this booklet there is information about Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) and how you can apply for this. Once you have applied and been made eligible, you are asked to attend a study needs assessment by your funding body. Your study needs assessor can make recommendations for DSA-funded support based on your individual needs. The University does have its own **Needs Assessment Centre** however your funding body provides you with information to search for your local centre. You need to contact your needs assessor regarding any DSA-funded support or if you wish to make any changes to your study needs assessment.

## Finance adviser

Finance advisers can give you advice on a number of queries including: applications for student funding, funds related to childcare, financial hardship, student loans, suspensions and withdrawals, benefit information or any ongoing advice you might require around student funding.

## Accommodation team

The Accommodation Team support you with deciding on suitable University accommodation and are available throughout your time here to help with any queries or concerns. Email: [accommodation@tees.ac.uk](mailto:accommodation@tees.ac.uk)

## Wardens

You have a team of wardens living in your university accommodation who can offer support outside office hours. The wardens are students too and they are on duty from 7.00pm to 6.00am. There's someone on duty all weekend too, even during the day. They help with any query you may have and can provide assistance during fire alarms and deal with accommodation concerns such as noise complaints. If you feel you need to talk to someone the wardens can be there to listen and can help signpost you to the most appropriate service to help. You can contact the accommodation team to find out who your warden is and how to contact them.

## Faith and reflection

The Faith and Reflection service is for everyone. It offers confidential, non-judgemental pastoral care and support to all students within the University. You don't have to practise any particular faith to use the service and it can be about any issue. They also offer a range of activities and events throughout the year. The faith adviser, Emma Davisworth organises events and activities for all. You can contact Emma by emailing [studentlife@tees.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@tees.ac.uk)

## Security and feeling safe on campus

We have on campus security 24/7 who are based on the ground floor of the Library. They can offer support if you need to speak to someone about your safety on campus, and work closely with the accommodation and warden teams to ensure you feel comfortable and safe. You can visit them at any time if you need to. They can also be contacted on **01642 342086**.

For more information and advice on keeping yourself safe, please visit the [website](#).

Teesside University also have a SafeZone app which you can download to help you feel safe and secure. This gives you direct access to the security team 24/7 in an emergency. You can alert the security team to assist you from the app: [tees.ac.uk/sections/about/public\\_information/safezone.cfm](https://tees.ac.uk/sections/about/public_information/safezone.cfm)

