

## PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION SHEET 2011

We hope that you are looking forward to studying at Strode College. This pre-departure information sheet provides guidance on matters you should pay attention to before leaving your country for the United Kingdom. We also **strongly** recommend that you look at the British Council's pre-departure guide "First Steps" for more general information. This can be downloaded from the website [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org) Preparing for this adventure is crucial and will help you to settle in to your new way of life which will be both challenging and rewarding. We hope that you will find the following information useful and that it will help to make the transition as smooth as possible.

### Before you leave

Once you have been accepted to study at Strode College you will be given a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) unique reference number and specific information from the CAS to help with your application. In addition you will need to ensure that you have the correct amount of money in your bank account to cover your course fees and maintenance (monthly living costs). You will need the CAS, additional information and evidence of funds to obtain your visa.

Find out how to apply for your entry clearance into the UK either with the nearest British Diplomatic Post, or visit the website [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk). The immigration system in the UK is currently undergoing a number of changes and it is vital that you check the UK Visas and Home Office Border Agency ([www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)) websites on a regular basis. You **must** gain student entry clearance **before** travelling to the UK and you should do this in good time as it can take a while for your entry clearance application to be processed. Since 1 September 2007 there is provision for someone to come to the UK as a 'student visitor' but you must **avoid** this, or you will not be able to stay for longer than 6 months.

You should now read the Guidelines for Students in Homestay and decide if you wish to stay with a Homestay host family. If so you should now complete and return the Homestay Accommodation Application Form on the College website so that we can start finding appropriate accommodation ready for your arrival. You should also download the Medical Information and Consent Form for your parents to complete and this should be brought to enrolment. Print off a copy of the Before and After Checklist from our website. You should now book your flight to the UK. We ask that you do not plan to arrive in Street before 29 August 2011. Please be aware that 29 August is a public holiday in the UK and public transport may not be running as normal. We offer an optional airport meet and greet service - if you wish to use this service please give the relevant flight details to Annabel Mitchell, the Accommodation and Welfare Officer, as soon as possible so that arrangements can

be made for a member of staff to meet you on arrival. You can email these details to [studentaccommodation@strode-college.ac.uk](mailto:studentaccommodation@strode-college.ac.uk)

If you are unsure about what you can bring into the UK you should check beforehand with your local British Embassy or High Commission. Customs regulations in the UK are very strict. Do not bring in your luggage any food, illegal drugs or anything that could be considered a weapon. To find out more information on restricted and prohibited goods read [A customs guide for travellers entering the UK - Notice 1](#) on the HM Revenue and Customs website [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

Visit your current bank at home and ask about setting up a bank account in the UK and whether you need permission to transfer money. Also ask them for a reference letter which will help you to open an account in the UK. Buy enough British currency to cover your immediate needs (about £250) and use traveller's cheques (small denominations) and credit cards for the first few weeks.

Ensure that you have a current and valid passport. It is a good idea to photocopy the pages of your personal details (name, photograph, passport number and its date and place of issue). Also photocopy any stamps and visas in your passport and carry this with you in a separate place or bag when you travel in case of this getting lost or stolen.

International students who are in full time study for longer than six months are entitled to medical treatment on the National Health Service. You are advised however, to seriously consider taking out additional cover for medical insurance. You should also insure your luggage, personal possessions and money before leaving your home country. Contact Endsleigh Insurance on [www.endsleigh.co.uk](http://www.endsleigh.co.uk) who have policies available specifically for international students.

### **Arrival in the UK**

When you land in the UK you will first have to go through **passport control** at the airport. There are two separate queues: one for European Union, European Economic Area, British and Swiss nationals, and a second for all other nationalities, so make sure that you stand in the right queue. The UK Border Agency officer will ask to see your passport and any supporting documentation necessary for your visit e.g. your landing card and if required a valid visa or UK entry clearance. As long as your documents are in order you should pass through passport control smoothly. If you do need help for any reason ask the UK Border Agency officer to telephone Strode College or ask to see a representative of the Immigration Advisory Service.

After passport control follow the arrivals signs to the **baggage reclaim** area. Look for your flight number on the information screens to find out which carousel you need and wait for confirmation that it is ready. Once you have collected all of your luggage from the carousel you will need to pass through **customs control**. Read the notices in the customs area which will tell you if you need to declare anything. If in doubt ask one of the customs officers before passing through. Then follow the

arrivals signs to take you out of the airport where, if you have requested this service, you will be met by a member of our staff. Look for the hand held sign "Strode College". They will then accompany you in the taxi and take you to your Homestay host family or other accommodation provider. The taxi fare (from London Heathrow) will be at least £175 sterling so you will need to have this money (in cash) ready to pay at that time. If you decide to make your own travel arrangements from London Heathrow we recommend that you plan this carefully before you leave your home country. Further information is available on the website [www.heathrowairport.com](http://www.heathrowairport.com), follow the link To and From Heathrow.

Your entry clearance will state whether or not you have to register with the police within seven days of arrival in the UK. You will be given advice and support in doing this on arrival at Strode College. On your arrival in the UK arrangements will be made for you to visit the College where you will be shown around the campus and take part in an orientation session. You will also meet a member of the Admissions team at this time who will take you through the enrolment process.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information or have questions you need answering. You can email us at [studentaccommodation@strode-college.ac.uk](mailto:studentaccommodation@strode-college.ac.uk)

We look forward to meeting you soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Scott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bill Scott  
Student Support Manager  
February 2011