



Affiliate College of Swansea University

Pre-departure Guide – July 2009

Introduction

Congratulations on being offered a place to study at ICWS in association with Swansea University. Our staff look forward to helping you with all the important aspects of living and studying in the UK. Please take time to look through this Pre-departure Guide before departing for the UK. The information this document contains is designed to help you prepare for travelling, living and studying in the UK. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need further information before you depart.

➤ For further information and assistance with:

- Arrival
- Accommodation

Please contact the ICWS Student Support team:

- Email: p.swanborough@swansea.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 1792 602888

➤ For further information or clarification about:

- Letter of Admission
- Acceptance of Admission Form
- Visa Support Documents
- Confirmation of Admission

Please contact **Mrs Agnes George** (Admissions Coordinator) a.george@icws.swansea.ac.uk

We wish you a very safe journey to the UK and look forward to welcoming you to ICWS.

ICWS Student Support can be also be contacted on **+44(0)7780 686891** if you have any difficulty during your arrival or if the flight is significantly delayed

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Entry Clearance and Visa Guidance

When planning your studies abroad you should investigate which type of entry clearance you require for the UK. The entry clearance given to people who normally require a visa to enter the UK and intend to come to the UK to study is called a Student Visa. The notes below are intended for guidance only. For complete information on the requirements that apply in your country please check with your local British Embassy (see www.fco.gov.uk - follow the links for 'about the FCO' and then 'Find an Embassy') or your local ICWS representative. For UK Government information on general requirements for visa applications, application forms and official guidelines see www.ukvisas.gov.uk

For further government information regarding applying to study in the UK see: www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/ You can also seek advice from the Education Counselling Service at your local branch of the British Council. Check to see if there is an office near you at www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm

If you intend to request advice from your nearest consulate, please note that some consulates do not provide a visa service and require you to contact the main British Embassy in your country. The British Embassy can advise you regarding their local entry clearance system and the cost of the application process. Certain Embassies will send you the application forms and guidance booklet by post, while others will require you to collect them in person. Some Embassies require you to bring in your completed application form in person so that they can check your application form and supporting documents before submitting them for a decision, while others will accept application and give decisions by post. It is common for Embassies to have very long waiting lists for student visa interviews or take a long time to process applications, especially at busy periods in the year. You should make sure you have all the information you need about the visa application process so that when you receive your Letter of Admission and Visa Support Documentation from ICWS you can apply for your visa without delay.

Check with your local British Embassy so that you can make sure that you have sufficient time to obtain your student visa before you travel to the UK. If you are unable to obtain your student visa in time to let you travel to the UK for the start of your intake semester, you might need to consider deferring your offer of a place to the following semester. If you find yourself in this situation contact the ICWS office for advice.

When completing your application form or at your visa interview please remember the following:

The entry clearance officer will ask you to demonstrate:

- **Proof of full-time student status** - that you will be a full-time student at ICWS on a degree pathway leading to a degree from the Swansea University. You should show the entry clearance officer your ICWS Confirmation of Admission letter and Visa Support Documents. These will be emailed or couriered to you or your agent after you have paid your deposit. These will confirm receipt of your payment of fees and contain all the information the visa officer needs about your offer and your acceptance of this offer.
- **Appropriate qualifications** - that you have the appropriate qualifications to undertake the programme you will be studying. You should produce evidence of your current qualifications. These should be in the form of original certificates and documents as **photocopies are not accepted**.
- **Knowledge of the programme** - that you have an in-depth knowledge of the programme you intend to study, including the subjects you will be studying, and be able to provide reasons why you wish to study in the UK rather than your own country.
- **Sufficient English Language ability** - that you have English language skills appropriate for the level of course you will be studying. If you have taken an IELTS test or a similar English Language qualification, please ensure you have the original documentation to prove this. If you have taken the Navitas English Language test, please ensure that you have a copy of one of our informal certificates, which explains to the visa officer that you have been tested and that this has been assessed by us. If you have taken the Navitas test and do not have a copy of this documentation please contact ICWS.

- **Ability to pay fees** - that you have the financial resources to afford the course you are registered for. In order to receive your Visa Support Documents and Confirmation of Admission letter from us, you will need to pay a minimum of one (1) semester's tuition fees. We will only refund these fees if you do not obtain your visa to study in the UK. Please refer to the ICWS refund policy in the brochure. It is important that the visa officer is aware that you have paid your tuition fees and, in addition to your Confirmation of Admission letter, it is also advisable to have a receipt reflecting your payment of these fees.

The entry clearance officer may ask you for information about where you will be living while you are studying in the UK:

- If you are going to stay in ICWS-arranged accommodation and have booked and paid a deposit for your accommodation you should provide the documents relating to these arrangements. If you require accommodation at ICWS and have not booked, please contact the Support Services team **as soon as possible on p.swanborough@swansea.ac.uk**
- If you are going to stay with friends or relatives you should provide documents from them confirming that you will be doing this. These should confirm that the person you will be staying with legally owns or rents the property, has enough space to accommodate you legally, and has given you express permission to live with them for the duration of your studies.
- If you have arranged private rented accommodation you should provide the contract for the property and evidence that you have paid a deposit or rent in advance.

The entry clearance officer will require you to provide evidence that you have enough money to cover your tuition and living expenses. Students wishing to enter the UK with their spouse will have to provide evidence that they have sufficient money to support themselves and their dependants for the duration of their studies. You must be able to provide a bank statement on an original bank letterhead showing that you have sufficient funds for the whole duration of your studies. **Please note printouts from automated teller machines or from internet banking sites will not be accepted.**

If you are being sponsored by your parents you will need to provide:

- a letter from them stating how much money you will be given and how often;
 - a letter from **their bank** or their bank statement showing that they have sufficient funds available;
- OR**
- a letter from their employer or company accounts showing that their income will be sufficient to continue supporting you throughout your studies.

If a company or charity is sponsoring you, you will need to provide a letter from the organisation confirming:

- how much money they will provide;
- how often you will be paid (e.g.: by month, by week, or by semester);
- how long they will be paying for you;
- if they will be paying your tuition fees only.

If you are not fully sponsored you will have to provide evidence that you have sufficient savings of your own or other sources of funding for living expenses. The entry clearance officer may ask for more information, such as company accounts or publicity material, on companies or charities that are not well known.

If you will be taking a student loan from a bank or another source you should provide evidence that your loan has been approved. International students may work part time, up to a maximum of 20 hours per week, whilst they are studying in the UK, but projected earnings from such employment cannot be used as proof of sufficient resources to pay tuition fees and living expenses.

If you are married and receive a student visa valid for more than one year, your spouse may be given permission to work in the UK whilst you are studying, but projected earnings for such employment in the UK cannot be used as proof of sufficient resources to support both of you.

Having insufficient financial resources or failing to provide details about sponsors may result in your application for a student visa being rejected. You should make sure that you are aware of the **total amount of money** you will need to fund your studies in the UK. You should be able to demonstrate that you already have sufficient money or be able to explain to the entry clearance officer how you are going to obtain this money. An estimated cost of study is given in your Visa Support Document. Please refer to this as a guideline to the minimum resources that you will need to prove are available to you.

The entry clearance officer will need to ensure that you intend leaving the UK on completion of your studies. In order to satisfy this criterion, you will need to be able to demonstrate that:

- there are job opportunities in your country in the fields you are studying; and that
- you have personal ties in your home country, which will increase the likelihood that you will return home at the end of your studies.

It can sometimes be difficult for students to obtain a student visa and a dependent's visa for their spouse as entry clearance officers may wish to be assured that you do intend to return home, and do not intend to settle in the UK at the end of your studies.

In addition to the above, students from some countries may have to provide proof of vaccinations, chest x-ray and/or health certificate. Some students may also have to undergo a medical check before they can enter the UK. You should check with the British Embassy whether you will have to provide evidence of your medical history either when you apply for your student visa or upon entry to the UK.

The application for a visa will also require you to supply full biometric information, including electronic scans of your fingerprints and full-face digital photograph. Your visa will not be processed until this information has been collected. For more information, see www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/biometricvisa/

The information provided above serves only as a guide and is not necessarily exhaustive. The entry clearance officer may ask you to provide additional information and/or documentation.

Travel Arrangements

Many students travel to and from the UK at the beginning and end of each semester, therefore flights can be heavily oversubscribed at these times. It is advisable to make a flight booking as soon as you have confirmed your enrolment with ICWS.

Orientation is held over the week before classes start, and attendance is compulsory. You should try to arrive in the UK a day or two prior to Orientation to allow time to settle in. During Orientation Week time will be allowed to open bank accounts and become familiar with the campus, local transport and surrounding areas.

Students in private accommodation will need to arrive 3 – 5 days in advance to arrange accommodation, and ICWS staff will be on hand to help with any problems during this time. If your accommodation is not arranged in advance please expect to stay in a hotel or B&B for 2 – 3 days while the accommodation is arranged.

Students who arrive in the UK late and miss Orientation will find it difficult to adjust and will miss out on vital information about studying and living in Swansea.

Students who cannot arrive by the first day of teaching will miss valuable introductions to their modules/programmes and they must contact ICWS to seek permission for late arrival. If permission is granted, it is on the understanding that it is the student's responsibility to catch up on any academic work that may have been missed.

Please ensure that you contact us with your flight details as soon as your flight is booked. Please contact Support Services at t.goss@swansea.ac.uk

See 'Important dates' on the last page for information on when accommodation is available, and the dates and times of orientation, semester dates and so on.

Preparing to Leave Home

Important documents

You should bring the following documents with you to the UK as they will be required throughout various stages of your stay:

- ✓ A valid passport and student visa
- ✓ At least four (4) passport sized photographs*
- ✓ Your initial Letter of Offer
- ✓ Your Confirmation of Admission
- ✓ Your Visa Support Document
- ✓ Your Acceptance of Admission Form (completed)
- ✓ Certified copies or originals of your academic transcripts (including evidence of English proficiency)
- ✓ Personal Identification (e.g. driver's licence, birth certificate, etc.)
- ✓ Any medical prescriptions/certificates/history/reports
- ✓ Full details of your accommodation in the UK
- ✓ Evidence of funds – a letter confirming personal or family resources, or confirmation of sponsorship
- ✓ Proof of your address in your home country
- ✓ Contact numbers for any family/friends in the UK
- ✓ Contact details of family/friends in the event of an emergency

*It is useful to bring a number of small (passport-sized) full-face photographs, as these are often required for various cards (such as student rail cards) and for Police registration (if required); they must be standard UK passport size, with white or pale grey coloured background, and include the whole head and shoulders. Photographs can be obtained in the UK, but may be more expensive than in your home country.

Packing your things

Student dress codes in the UK are normally casual. The general rule is to wear something in which you feel comfortable. Most students wear jeans and trainers to lectures. It is important to ensure that what you wear is not potentially offensive to the people you will encounter (for example your lecturers or fellow students) in the UK.

Medium weight clothing is appropriate throughout the year but lighter weight is useful for summer. Warmer clothing and footwear including rainwear is needed for winter. It is recommended that you have a light waterproof jacket for all the year. Summers can be quite warm in the coastal regions but it is advisable to have warmer clothing on higher ground throughout the year. You can pick up most of these things relatively cheaply in Swansea, but you may wish to bring some personal items (basic toiletries - toothbrush, soap, towel, etc.) so that you do not need to go shopping as soon as you arrive. Much of what you may need can also be bought in Swansea, if you are struggling to get your suitcase within the luggage limits, or forget anything.

If you need spectacles or contact lenses, we also advise that you bring a spare pair and a current optical prescription, as these items are expensive in the UK.

You can buy a bedding pack from ICWS which contains a mattress cover, fitted sheet, pillow, pillow case, duvet and duvet cover, hand towel, bath towel and bath mat, for £45.00 and if you are in accommodation arranged by us, your bedding pack will be waiting when you arrive, if you have paid in advance.

Phoning home

There are a range of options for students who want to regularly call home, and you may want to look at the different options before you leave your home country. Your existing mobile phone operator may have special deals, or you may buy pre-paid phone cards in your home country at a lower price than in the UK. You may want to get a cheap mobile phone deal in the UK for making local calls, or you may want to arrange to use the phone service through Virgin if you are staying in Llys Glas.

A little time spent on the internet will give you an idea of the deals available, for example by searching for 'calls to the UK' in your home country's page on Google.

You might want to consider using Skype; an internet-based service that is free to other Skype users and very cheap to mobile or landline phones across the world. Again, search the internet for information.

You may find that a combination of these options may be the best for you and your family and friends at home and in the UK. You can also arrange your phone service from the UK when you arrive.

Do make sure you have enough credit on your mobile phone when you arrive so you can call home and let them know you have arrived.

Electrical items

The electricity supply in the UK has a much higher voltage than some countries outside Europe. Before packing any electrical appliances, please check that they are compatible with the UK electricity supply, and buy adapters where necessary. See wikitravel.org/en/Electrical_systems for more advice on this subject.

If you are bringing your own laptop or other electrical device you will need to purchase suitable adaptor plugs before you leave home. You will need to carry your laptop in your hand luggage to avoid damage from magnetic scans.

Keeping well

If you take any medicines regularly you should bring enough for the first few weeks, and a prescription for your next requirements. If you wear glasses it is a good idea to bring a spare pair with you and again have the prescription with you in case it is needed.

A common problem with students who are away from home for the first time is learning to cook and clean for yourself. If you have not done much cooking before, you might like to bring a cookbook that has 'recipes for one', or for students; or ask your parents to write down the recipes for your favourite foods so you can make them yourself. There is a wide range of shops in Swansea that sell food from around the world and you will be able to buy most things you will need, as well as the opportunity to try new recipes and flavours from other cooking traditions.

But as in any big city, Swansea also has a lot of take-away food shops, and if you rely on take-away food too much you will find that your health and happiness suffers from the lack of fresh ingredients (not to mention the unwanted weight gain!). Be prepared to look after yourself properly ☺

Studying in the UK: Prepare for Success

Learning and teaching styles will be different in the UK from what you may have been used to. It is very important that you get as much information on what it will be like here, to make the changes easier and more profitable. A great place to start is **Prepare for Success** at <http://www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk/> and our teachers have recommended this site as a first step towards settling in to the university life.

Please make sure you have gone through the 'Prepare for Success' site carefully and looked at all the different aspects.

Arriving in the UK

Customs and quarantine

Students arriving in the UK will have to undergo a number of formalities before they can enter. You will need to pass through immigration controls and customs. You should ensure that you have the following **available in your hand luggage** when you arrive in the UK:

- ✓ Valid passport
- ✓ Valid visa or entry certificate
- ✓ Evidence of funding – personal or family resources, confirmation of sponsorship
- ✓ The letter from ICWS confirming your place of study as a full-time student
- ✓ Recent medical report including x-ray results if this applies to you

You may be asked for additional information regarding your proposed studies in the UK.

Immigration procedures at British Airports can be stringent and may result in a considerable delay at the end of your flight, especially during peak traffic periods (at the start of term and at UK holiday periods). To assist the immigration officials, keep all your documents available and be prepared to wait patiently.

There may also be a check of your baggage at the Customs and Quarantine desk to ensure that you comply with import restrictions and are not carrying any banned items. For information on what goods you may bring into the UK, please go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/nav/index.htm, click on the link to 'Travel' – on that page you will see links to 'Information for travellers', 'How to go through Customs' and 'Banned & restricted goods'.

It is very important that we know when you are arriving and where you intend to stay in the UK. Please contact us with your flight details as soon as you book your flights and, if staying in private accommodation, a UK address and telephone number. We can then ensure that your arrival into the UK is as smooth as possible. A mobile phone number is also needed in case we have to contact you when you first arrive.

Where to go when you arrive in Swansea

Full information on how to get to Swansea and the Llys Glas halls of residence will be found in the section "Accommodation at Llys Glas: How to get to Llys Glas". Students who are not arriving in the UK at London Heathrow or who are staying in private accommodation will also find information in this section.

A map of Swansea, showing the location of Swansea University, and a map of the Swansea campus, to help you locate ICWS, can be found at www.swan.ac.uk/alumniandvisitors/MapsLocation/

Who needs to register with the Police?

Certain nationalities of international students are required to register with the UK Police on arrival. This is also stated as a condition of some students' visas and will be clearly indicated in your passport when you receive the student visa with the words 'Please register with the Police within seven (7) days'. Students from all the following countries will need to register with the local Police:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Palestine, Peru, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, UAE, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

As part of the Orientation programme we will arrange for the Police to come in to ICWS to register you. As long as you make sure you attend this session you will not need to worry about finding the Police Station. If you are unable to attend this session, please inform us when you arrive and we will give you full details about where to go and who to speak to. Please note that this registration is an official requirement for administrative purposes and nothing to worry about. Generally the Police in the UK have a reputation as being very kind and helpful.

Living in the UK

Full information on the city and area of Swansea will be found in the section “Living in Swansea”

Useful facilities in Swansea City Centre

Swansea City centre has a good array of independent shops and boutiques side by side with all the high street shops that you would expect to see in the UK; all of the major high street banks and building societies; numerous restaurants, cafes, bars and public houses; dentists, several doctors surgeries and Swansea Market, which is open Monday to Saturday.

Major supermarkets, such as Tesco and Sainsbury’s have stores in the city, usually with a wide range of foods, and there is a good range of speciality shops and restaurants; St Helens Road, Oxford Street and the High Street have Asian and Halal grocers within half a mile of the city centre and Llys Glas.

More information on central Swansea shopping facilities, activities and night life will be included in your welcome pack on arrival, and can also be found at www.swanseacitycentre.com and www.swansea.info, as well as using Google searches for any specific information you may want.

The weather

The climate in Wales is moderate: summers are warm and winters are cool and mild. You can find out more detailed information on the weather in Swansea by visiting the BBC Weather Centre website – www.bbc.co.uk/weather/ukweather/wales/.

Average temperatures:

Summer	21°C – 12°C	(June, July, August)
Autumn	14°C – 7°C	(September, October, November)
Winter	8°C – 3°C	(December, January, February)
Spring	13°C – 5°C	(March, April, May)

Public transport

The public transport system in the UK consists of the over-ground rail, ferries and buses as well as the famous underground trains in London. The cost of public transport depends on the type of ticket you buy and the distance that is to be travelled.

There is a network of frequent and reliable local buses, and these provide excellent access to all parts of Swansea. Further information, including student bus passes for Swansea, can be obtained from the Travel Shop in Fulton House on campus. For student discount on the First Direct bus company lines, see www.firstgroup.com/students/wales/

For UK and European coach travel, timetables and further information are available from www.nationalexpress.com. As a student you can apply for a coach card that will give you up to 30% off your coach ticket.

If you are aged 16 to 25, or a full-time student over 25 years of age, and planning on using the train regularly it would be a good idea to apply for a young person’s railcard. The card will cost you around £24 for 1 year, or £65 for 3 years and can save you 1/3 on fares throughout Great Britain. You can get further information online at www.16-25railcard.co.uk. You can purchase a railcard at this website once you are living at a UK address, or if you have proof of age (or proof of student status if over 25) and a passport-sized photograph you can purchase a one-year railcard at any national rail station.

Employment

International students are allowed to work a maximum of 20 hours per week under the terms of their student visa during the semester. At vacation times you can work full-time. Information for students on working in the UK can be found at http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/working_during_studies.php

Students should not rely on part time jobs to fund living expenses or pay tuition fees. Any income earned from part time jobs should be seen only as a supplement to established sources of funding.

National Insurance

Everyone who works in the UK must pay National Insurance (NI) contributions. If you have a part-time job offer or can provide evidence that you are actively seeking work you can apply for a NI number. Please contact Pam Swanborough, Manager of Support Services, for further information on how to apply for an NI number once you arrive at ICWS.

Medical Insurance

You should ensure you have adequate medical insurance to cover medical costs should you fall ill, and the additional possible costs resulting from illness. These can be substantial, and include:

- Lost fees if you are unable to complete your course
- Costs of returning home if a relative is ill
- Costs of a relative visiting you in the UK if you fall ill
- Cost of returning to your home country for treatment

Even if you are entitled to free NHS treatment whilst in the UK, you should still ensure that you have adequate medical insurance which covers the above costs which could be incurred if you or your family are unfortunate enough to become ill or have an accident. If you have medical insurance in your home country, check whether you can extend it to cover your stay in the UK, as well as looking at options available from UK insurers.

Endsleigh Insurance, in association with UKCISA, has produced a special health insurance policy for international students and their spouses and dependants in the UK. This gives you a choice of two levels of cover, either relying on NHS treatment, or for an extra premium also giving access to private treatment. Details of the policy can be found on the Endsleigh website, www.endsleigh.co.uk

Personal Property Insurance

Students in Llys Glas halls of residence will have their insurance included in the rental, up to a value of £3000, arranged with Endsleigh insurance. If you have individual items of greater value than £3000 each, you will need to contact Endsleigh through their website to arrange extra cover.

Llys Glas residents can see their conditions of cover by going to www.endsleigh.co.uk/student-posessions.html and clicking on the link 'Review your cover' in the box headed "Cover already arranged..." – on the next page enter 'Swansea University' in the first field, then follow the online instructions, selecting Llys Glas from the given list as your residence and so on.

Students in private accommodation:

Your personal property is not covered by the property insurance and if you have any valuable things you should arrange cover as soon as you settle in. NB: You will not need to insure for the building or furniture that belongs to the landlord, they will arrange that.

Several companies specialise in student insurance cover, and you can look on the internet for the deal that suits you best. Try the following sites:

- www.endsleigh.co.uk - click on the link for Student insurance
- www.cover4students.com
- <http://www.eandl.co.uk/student-insurance>
- <http://www.theaa.com/student-insurance/>

You may get a good deal from your bank if they also do student insurance deals, see:

- <http://www.hsbc.co.uk/1/2/personal/insurance/student-insurance>
- <http://www.barclays.co.uk/insurance/student-insurance/possessions.html>
- <http://www.natwest.com/personal/insurance/g1/student-belongings-insurance.ashx>
- <http://www.insurance.lloydstsb.com/personal/student/overview.asp>

ICWS Pre-Departure Guide

Accommodation at Llys Glas Halls of Residence

Location of Residence

Llys Glas is located on Alexandra Road, Swansea, SA1 5AJ. To locate this residence on a map, go to www.multimap.com and under the heading 'find a map' type the postcode SA1 5AJ and select 'United Kingdom' for the country.

Facilities

Each bedroom in Llys Glas will have an en suite private bathroom, telephone point and broadband connection cable (not wireless). See below for further information on setting up a phone or internet service. Furniture includes a desk, bookshelf and drawers, clothes cupboard, bedside drawers, lamp, pin board, curtains, carpets and heater.

All service bills are included in the rent, so the student won't have to worry about paying for electricity, water and so on, as long as usage is at a reasonable level.

Students can purchase a bedding pack containing mattress cover, duvet and cover, pillow and pillow case, fitted sheet, hand towel, bath towel and bath mat, and small toiletries pack, for £45.00 which will be ready in their room when they arrive; the bedding is now theirs and they should take it with them on departure. Additional pillow and covers if required can be purchased for a few pounds in the local stores.

Students will share a kitchen with four or more other students according to their room number; access to each kitchen is restricted to the allocated students. The kitchen is complete with modern oven, hotplates and microwave. The kitchen also has a washing machine and tumble drier which students can use, paid for by tokens purchased at the office. There is a shared fridge/freezer and storage cupboards for students' own food, crockery, cutlery and saucepans etc. (not provided by the college).

The cleaning of the kitchen (stove, fridge, floors etc) and other communal areas is arranged by the college, but students will be responsible for cleaning their own room and en suite and washing their own clothes and dishes. All cleaning equipment, including a broom and vacuum cleaner, is provided for shared use in each kitchen.

There is a shared space for storing bikes, which can be bought upon arrival in the UK for a range of prices; a bike locking device is a recommended purchase as well.

Support

Llys Glas has resident tutors who live in the building with the students, and will be available for any problems the students' have, up until midnight each day. In addition, ICWS provides a 24/7 emergency phone number for any urgent or serious situations that may arise, such as illness, accidents, and so on. Access to the building is secure and only available to resident students and designated support staff.

In addition an office in the entrance will be staffed on a regular basis in the early weeks of term as a central point for problems, questions and so on. Further details will be given in the student welcome pack upon arrival; all students will also be required to sign an agreement covering condition of rental upon arrival and then given their key.

The central location and support resources in place at Llys Glas allows ICWS to provide a safe, friendly and supportive environment while students become familiar with the new experiences of studying and living in Swansea.

How to get to Llys Glas

To make your own way to Swansea, by public transport:

- **by coach** – departing from the Heathrow main bus terminal, National Express coach 202 to Swansea main bus terminal will cost around £32.00 with a discount card (see below) or approximately £40.00 standard fare, and the journey takes approx 4.5 hours; booking online is available at www.nationalexpress.com A 'Young Persons Coachcard' can be purchased online by credit card for £10.00 per year and delivered to your home address prior to departure, for savings of up to 30% on National Express travel across the UK and parts of

Europe. See www.nationalexpress.com/coach/offers/students.cfm for details. Coaches leave from Heathrow every 90 - 120 minutes and the journey takes an average of 4 hours and 30 minutes.

On arrival at Swansea Quadrant bus station, change to a local bus to take you to the Llys Glas halls (ask at the bus station for which bus to catch) is about £1.00 one-way. You will need to have some small change in UK currency for the local bus as the driver will not be able to change large denomination bank notes (you can buy a newspaper, drink, or food at the Heathrow bus depot before you go, to get some change).

- **By rail** – it is possible to travel by train from Heathrow Underground to Swansea, changing trains at London Paddington station. The journey takes about 4 hours and costs range from discounted advance tickets (booked in advance, available over the internet; conditions apply) up to around £65.00 (bought on the day of travel) for a standard one-way ticket; first class travel is considerably more expensive. See www.nationalrail.co.uk or www.thetrainline.com for details of journey, train times and fare options. If you are booking in advance make sure you allow plenty of time at the airport for customs checks and other possible delays prior to your train's departure time, as some tickets cannot be transferred to later departures. Trains leave Heathrow twice an hours and the journey takes around 3 hours and 45 minutes.

To walk from the station to Llys Glas, from the station forecourt, with the Grand Hotel on your left and the station on your right, cross at the traffic lights into Alexander Road, walk along a short distance crossing over Orchard Place – Llys Glas is the tall building on the left hand corner, opposite the Glyn Vivien Gallery. The main entrance is on Alexandra Road; it will take you about 2 minutes from the station, even with luggage.

Arrival at Llys Glas

Students who are making their own way to Llys Glas should make sure they arrive at the residence between 8am and 11pm at night, to enable them to be checked into their room. If you are arriving in Swansea between 0900 and 1630 on Mondays – Fridays you should come straight to the college and we will get you checked into your room later on; OR call us when you arrive at Heathrow and arrange a time to meet.

If your arrival time means you will be coming to Swansea between 2300 and 0830, please **do not** travel down but stay at an airport hotel, and travel down the next morning; this way you will get a good night's sleep and not be in arriving an unfamiliar city late at night.

All students will be given a key to their room and post box after signing the tenancy agreement, as long as the accommodation deposit has been paid. Access to your designated kitchen and the front door is also by your room key.

Phone and internet:

To connect to the internet from the bedroom you will need to bring an Ethernet cable, and just plug this into the wall socket; if you have any problems with the internet service contact the Support Services team at College. To set up a landline telephone account, you will need to register with Virgin; there is no cost for the internet access. Information and support on this will be provided in your Welcome Pack on arrival.

Laptops will not need wireless capacity for use in Llys Glas, although this may be a useful addition for working in the University library.

End of tenancy

At the end of your ICWS course you will be required to move out of Llys Glas. You may want to arrange private accommodation with a group of friends at this time, or to return home for the vacation, depending on when your next course starts. ICWS Support Services will be happy to assist in finding private accommodation. If you want to return home you may choose to store your University belongings in Swansea and collect them when you return. Details on companies who provide student storage can be found on the internet or ask at ICWS Support.

Currency

Cash

You should make sure you bring a small amount of cash with you for your day-to-day expenses until you have registered at ICWS and opened a bank account. We recommend £200 in small denominations (£5, £10 and £20 notes), as change can be a problem in some of the smaller stores.

DO NOT carry a large amount of cash when you travel to the UK! Whatever amount of cash you bring with you, make sure:

- You bring Sterling (GB Pounds). In the UK you will not be able to use Dollars or any other currency to pay for things. If you do bring other currencies to the UK, you will need to change other currencies into Sterling when you arrive, and you will be charged for this.
- You should ensure that you keep the cash on your person when travelling. Use a body belt or similar to carry cash and other valuables, and do not under any circumstances place money in your hold baggage. When you arrive at your accommodation secure the cash in your room and make sure your room is secure when you are out.
- If you do have a large amount of cash you should contact the ICWS office. We cannot store it for you but will advise you on how to open a bank account. In the UK you will not normally be able to open a bank account until you have registered with the College as a student and arranged permanent accommodation.

Please note that the college cannot take responsibility for cash lost by students. It is your responsibility to keep it safe. This is why we recommend that you do not bring large amounts of cash with you.

Travellers' cheques

Travellers' cheques are a good alternative to carrying cash as they can be converted into cash as you need it. Unlike a personal cheque, you do not need to have a UK bank account in order to use them. If you lose them or they are stolen you can apply to have them replaced. You should normally try to get Sterling-based travellers' cheques as these are the easiest to cash, if you bring travellers cheques in any other currency most banks and exchange bureaux will impose a charge for converting them to Sterling. Sterling travellers cheques can be used to pay for purchases in larger shops in major towns and cities, but not all local shops will accept them. When travelling make sure you keep details of your traveller's cheques and your passport separate from the cheques.

Credit card

The College can accept payment for tuition fees and accommodation charges via most major credit cards (NB: There is a 2.5% handling charge for paying fees and accommodation by credit card). Make sure that your credit limit is sufficient to allow you to make this payment. Check with your bank or credit provider before you leave home. You should also make sure that you give someone at home authority to pay money into your credit card account whilst you are in the UK.

Debit or switch card

If you have a debit card (Maestro, Visa or Cirrus) you can use it to pay your tuition fees and accommodation charges (there is no handling charge for payment by debit card), as well as for shopping and other expenses. Make sure you have sufficient money in your account to allow you to make this payment. Check with your bank before you leave home. You should also make sure that you give someone at home authority to pay money into your bank account whilst you are in the UK.

Getting Started at ICWS

Orientation and Enrolment

The ICWS Orientation Programme is held in the week before semester commences (the date and time of your Orientation is on your Letter of Admission). **Attendance is compulsory.** The Orientation covers essential matters relating to your study at ICWS such as enrolment, facilities, procedures and support services, as well as the opportunity to go on a tour of the area. It is also a great chance to start making friends.

At Orientation you will be issued with an Orientation Pack containing your course and unit information, booklists and other important information.

Late arrivals who do not attend this Orientation Session must let ICWS Support Services know, so we can arrange for you to attend an alternative session.

Enrolment will take place following the Orientation session. You will be required to complete your personal details, such as address, visa details, etc. before going on to select the units you will study in that semester.

YOU **MUST** BRING ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WITH YOU TO ENROLMENT:

- Current passport and current visa for the UK;
- 2 passport-sized photographs;
- Original documents of your previous qualifications that you have used to apply for this course (eg IELTS Certificate, school diploma or certificate, references, etc). These **must be originals** and photocopies will not be accepted;
- If you have changed your name since the passport or visa was issued, we will need to see the **original** documents to prove this change;
- ICWS Letter of Offer or copy of ICWS visa support letter;
- Proof of payment of fees; or credit or debit card if you have not yet paid your fees in total (NB: Credit card will have a 2% handing charge; there is no charge for paying by debit card)
- Money, if you have to register with the Police (see page 8 for information)

YOU CANNOT ATTEND CLASSES UNTIL ENROLMENT IS COMPLETED AND ALL FEES PAID.

ICWS office hours

ICWS is open Monday – Friday, from 8:30am – 5:00pm.

The office is closed on Saturday and Sunday, and all national bank holidays (Wales).

If you need to contact ICWS Support outside of office hours, **only in an emergency, phone +44(0)7780 686891.**

Things to see and do in the Swansea area

ICWS students have the advantage of studying in one of the UK's most beautiful and diverse regions, nestled between the spectacular, rugged Black Mountains and the glorious beaches of Swansea Bay.

Believed to have been founded in the 11th Century by Viking invaders as a trading post, Swansea is Wales' second largest city and offers a wide range of activities and cultural events.

Natural Beauty

The Gower Peninsula was Britain's first Designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is a popular destination for walking, swimming, surfing or sailing from the bays and city marina, while the hilly interior offers a delightful place for walking and other outdoor leisure activities. It's also a popular area for the new sport of 'coasteering' which involves travelling along the edge of the ocean without use of a boat or other vehicles, and uses both swimming and rock climbing skills (see www.callofthewild.co.uk)

On the Gower peninsula:

- Oxwich Bay was named the most beautiful beach in Britain by travel writers who visited more than 1,000 around the world in search of the perfect sands, with magnificent and unspoilt scenery and over three miles (5 km) of soft, golden sands.
- Rhossili Bay has been described by one travel magazine as "the British supermodel of beaches" and the best beach in Britain for breathtaking cliffs, even as one of the 25 best beaches in the world. Thanks to its clear air and lovely golden sand, this romantic stretch of sand was voted the best place in the UK to watch the sun set, and one of the top romantic spots in the country.
- Llangennith Beach, with its soft sands, and great facilities, was listed as the best place to learn how to surf in Britain and one of the 10 'classic surfing beaches'.

The Gower also claims Britain's Best Beach, Three Cliffs Bay.

The Loughor Estuary is the home of the renowned Salt Marsh Lamb, meat produced from sheep that graze the estuary's salt marshes, and this area also allows an opportunity to study the region's birds and wildlife (see www.wwt.org.uk/centre/120/national_wetland_centre_wales.html), while the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains present a more challenging day's outing amongst the spectacular mountains, impressive caves and tumbling waterfalls.

Recreation

Swansea boasts a large modern cinema complex, and a number of theatres in the city and the surrounding areas. There are also a wide range of excellent museums on a range of themes, for more information see www.museumwales.ac.uk and www.swanseaheritage.net or any of the many other Welsh tourism websites.

The Grand Theatre in the centre of the city is a Victorian theatre which has a capacity of a little over a thousand people; a new wing of the Grand, the Arts Wing, has a studio suitable for smaller shows, with a capacity of about 200. It was opened by the celebrated opera singer Adelina Patti in 1897 and the annual programme ranges from pantomime and drama to opera and ballet.

The Taliesin building on the University's Singleton Park campus has a theatre with a regular programme of films and live performances.

Other theatres include the Dylan Thomas Theatre near the marina, and one in Penyrheol Leisure Centre near Gorseinon.

In the summer, outdoor Shakespeare performances are a regular feature at Oystermouth Castle, and Singleton Park is the venue for a number of parties and concerts, from dance music to outdoor Proms.

A few miles out of town is Pontardawe, home of an annual folk festival, and another folk festival is held on Gower, in addition to numerous live music venues around the city itself, covering folk, classical, pop, rock, dance and jazz.

Standing near Victoria Park on the coast road is the Patti Pavilion; this was the Winter Garden from Adelina Patti's Craig-y-Nos estate, which is now used as a venue for music shows and fairs.

The Brangwyn Hall is a multi-use venue with events such as the graduation ceremonies for Swansea University. Every autumn, Swansea hosts a Festival of Music and the Arts, when international orchestras and soloists visit the Brangwyn Hall, praised for its acoustics, for recitals, orchestral pieces and chamber music.

On the Waterfront, Swansea Bay has a five mile (8 km) sweep of coastline which features a beach, promenade, children's lido, leisure pool, marina and Maritime Quarter featuring the newest and oldest museums in Wales - the National Waterfront Museum and Swansea Museum. Also situated in the Maritime Quarter is the Dylan Thomas Centre which celebrates the life and work of that renowned poet. The centre is also the focal point for the annual Dylan Thomas Festival (27 October - 9 November).

Swansea Bay, Mumbles and Gower are home to various parks and gardens and almost 20 nature reserves. Clyne Gardens is home to a collection of plants set in parkland and host to 'Clyne in Bloom' in May. Next to the University, Singleton Park (of which the University's main campus is named after) has acres of parkland, a botanical garden, a boating lake with pedal boats, and 'crazy golf'.

Plantasia is a tropical hothouse pyramid featuring a variety of unusual plants, including several species which are extinct in the wild, and monkeys, reptiles, fish and a butterfly house.

Swansea has a range of outdoor activities including swimming, sailing, water skiing, surfing, sea angling, canoeing, rowing, hiking and cycling. Swansea Bay, Mumbles and Gower have a selection of golf courses. Swansea also attracts kitesurfing, kite buggying, and fishing enthusiasts.

Part of the Celtic Trail and the National Cycle Network, Swansea Bay provides a range of traffic-free cycle routes including routes along the seafront and through Clyne Valley Country Park. The Cycling Touring Club has a thriving local group in the area.

The Swansea Leisure Centre offers multi-purpose sports and leisure facilities, a huge water park and swimming pool, and state-of-the-art gym facilities; and the University Sports Centre and Wales National Pool are immediately adjacent to the university campus.

Further afield, mountain bikes can be hired for a guided tour into the Black Mountains (www.afan-valley-bike-hire.com) or all-terrain quad bikes for trips on cross-country trails (www.adventurewales.co.uk).

The area has been settled since prehistoric times and there are archaeological remains from Bronze, Iron and Roman settlements. The city of Swansea itself, however was a target for sustained bombing during the Second World War due to its importance as an industrial centre, and now boasts a lively, modern centre for shopping, dining out and varied nightlife opportunities. The city centre is undergoing a £1billion transformation over the next six years and presents a fresh and friendly place to live, work and play.

Swansea has a range of cafés, bars, and restaurants within the city centre. The majority of bars and clubs are situated on Wind Street, which has a large number of mainstream chains, each with a different atmosphere and music genre; alternative bars and clubs are located across the city centre and in the suburbs close to the university, with some having live music from local bands.

Wales

The principality of Wales is an ancient country, with a distinctive and unique language and culture that has survived and evolved over centuries of invasion, change and development.

Language

English is spoken by almost all people in Wales and Welsh (an ancient Celtic language) is spoken by more than 20% of the population; it is also taught in schools and the number who can speak, read and write in Welsh is increasing.

Most public signs will show both English and Welsh, and some place names will be given in both languages on road signs (e.g.: Swansea/Abertawe, Cardiff/Caerdydd); other places have the same name in both languages (e.g. Pontardawe).

You will notice that local people speak English with a lilting accent, and many words and sayings are unique to this country.

The land of the Red Dragon

The Dragon, part of the national flag design, is a popular Welsh symbol.

The oldest recorded use of the dragon to symbolise Wales is from the *Historia Brittonum*, written around 820, and it is popularly supposed to have been the battle standard of King Arthur and other ancient Celtic leaders.

Wales has a rich folklore and traditional mythology, as well as a famous love of music, singing and poetry, as celebrated in the annual Eisteddfod in summer and a lively and varied music scene throughout the year.

For comprehensive information on the principality, a good travel guide will be a useful purchase. It is generally agreed that *The Rough Guide to Wales* is one of the best.

See www.roughguides.com/website/shop/products/Wales.aspx or other bookshop websites to purchase online, or look for it in local bookshops when you've arrived.

There are also a number of websites dedicated to information for visitors to Wales - a good place to start is www.visitwales.com

Visitors' accommodation

ICWS does not provide accommodation for any family or friend who may be accompanying or visiting students. There is a wide range of choices for visitors' accommodation in hotels, guest houses, bed & breakfast, and self-catering or serviced apartments, as Swansea is a popular tourist destination – but be advised that in summer the choice may be limited as many places are booked up early for the holidays (July and August). Prices vary depending on quality, location, facilities and the time of year – summer is the high season in Swansea and prices may rise then.

A good place to look for visitor accommodation is the internet, on sites such as:

- <http://www.walestouristsonline.co.uk/swansea/>
- <http://www.stayinwales.co.uk/accommresults.cfm?town=Swansea>
- <http://www.visitswanseabay.com/index.cfm?articleid=12987>

Important Dates for July intake, 2009:

		Notes:
Accommodation available from:	Monday 29 th June	A deposit of £700.00 is required to secure a room in Llys Glas. If you have not done this then please be prepared to stay one or two nights in a hotel while we arrange your accommodation.
Orientation	Wednesday 1 st July starts at 09:30 in ICWS	Attendance is required for all new students. You will enrol and get your timetable at Orientation.
Classes start	09:00 on Monday July 6 th	You must have paid in full and completed enrolment before you can attend any classes.
Last day of enrolment	Friday 17 th July at 17:00	You cannot start classes if you have not paid and enrolled by this day.
Accommodation fees: balance due	10 th July at 17:00	Any remaining fees for Llys Glas accommodation must be paid by this day.
August Bank holiday: College closed	31 st August	Banks, offices and many shops will be closed. Public transport will be limited. Not a good day to travel in the UK if you can avoid it.
Exams	14-19 th September	Do not plan to fly home at all during this time.
End of term:	19 th September	
Accommodation finishes:	2 nd January 2010	Rooms in Llys Glas must be vacated and keys returned by 12:00 on this day,. Damage deposit will be refunded within 2 weeks of the key returned.

NB: July intake students who are staying in Llys Glas will be required to sign up for their accommodation until January 2nd, regardless of when their course finishes. Please make sure you have completed the correct Accommodation form for July intake.

Important Contacts:

ICWS Reception: +44(0)1792 602888
 ICWS Emergency mobile: +44(0)7780 686891
 p.swanborough@swansea.ac.uk

Admissions: icws@swansea.ac.uk
 Accommodation:

Arrivals: t.goss@swansea.ac.uk

Important web sites:

Prepare for Success:

<http://www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk/>

UKCISA Information sheets: http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/information_sheets.php

British Council – Living in the UK website:

http://www.educationuk.org/pls/hot_bc/page_pls_user_article?x=152371023501&y=0&a=0&d=4050

Student Budget Calculator

<http://www.studentcalculator.org.uk/international/index.asp>

Public transport from Heathrow to Swansea:

http://www.londontoolkit.com/travel/heathrow_westcountry_transfer.htm (Scroll down to the bottom of this page to get quotes on private taxi hire from Heathrow to Swansea)

National Express coach travel and booking information:

<http://www.nationalexpress.com/coach/index.cfm>

National Rail travel and booking information:

<http://www.transportdirect.info/Web2/JourneyPlanning/FindTrainInput.aspx>

Visit Swansea Bay: <http://www.visitswanseabay.com/index.cfm?articleid=12370>

ICWS Pre-Departure Guide