



Guide to Living in Belfast

Almost 20 years after the signing of the Good Friday peace accords, Belfast is a city that has really come into its own. It has a lot to offer students and visitors, including tourist attractions, gardens, extensive parklands for walking and cycling, restaurants and pubs, and a thriving arts scene.

Belfast is a compact city, with most major attractions, the countryside and coast all within easy travelling distance. It is home to about a quarter of a million people (with a further quarter million in the surrounding suburbs and towns), giving it both the dynamism of a city and the friendliness of a smaller town. ISE is based in South Belfast, the best area of the city to live in as a student, with plenty of opportunities for social and intellectual action! Read on for lots of helpful tips on discount cards, entertainment, broadband providers, shipping services and more. Don't forget to read the ***Guide for International Students*** available on our website for pre-arrival information on visas, travel, and accommodation.

Updated March 2017

Safety

The Troubles gave Belfast a very bad image but with the ceasefires in the 1990's Belfast has developed into an exciting vibrant modern city. The city is generally very safe with a low crime rate. According to statistics from the United Nations International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS 2004), Northern Ireland has one of the lowest crime rates in Europe (lower than the United States and the rest of the United Kingdom). Belfast is also in the top 10 safest UK cities. Basically it's like any city, use your common sense and you will be fine.

Student Discount Cards

The International Student Identity Card opens up a world of discount both in Ireland and worldwide for the full-time international student. [Apply online.](#)

Students Union

The student representation body for ISE students is the Trinity [Graduate Students Union](#). As you will automatically be a member of GSU, you are entitled to use facilities at any Students Union - nearest branch – [Queens University](#). The all-Ireland [Student Union movement \(NUS-USI\)](#) has a useful website with advice on issues like job hunting, safety and welfare, information for international students etc.

QUB Library Card

In addition to our own specialist library at ISE Belfast, Trinity provides Belfast students with membership of the nearby Queen's University library so that you have access to a wider choice of study space, including evening and weekend opening hours.

Volunteering

The Community Learning module which forms part of the Master's teaching provides an opportunity to get involved in community life in Belfast. In addition there are lots of volunteering opportunities available locally – see [Volunteer Now](#) for full listings. You may also be interested in College's [resources on civic engagement](#).

Places of Worship

For those who wish to attend religious services while in Belfast, here are some suggestions:

- [Windsor Baptist](#) Malone Avenue
- [Fitzroy Presbyterian Church](#) University Street
- [Fisherwick Presbyterian Church](#) Malone Road
- [Lisburn Road Methodist Church](#)
- [All Saints Church of Ireland](#) University Street

- [Belfast Jewish Community](#) Somerton Road
- [Belfast Islamic Centre](#) Wellington Park
- [Quakers](#) Marlborough Park North, off Lisburn Road
- And in West Belfast: [Clonard Monastery](#) Falls Road

Sports Facilities

There are several council owned leisure centres in Belfast with reasonable monthly membership. For more details visit [Better Leisure Centres](#). If living in South Belfast you may be interested in joining [Queen's University PEC](#) which is in the Botanic Gardens, just off Stranmillis Road.

Tourist Information/Restaurants/Things to Do Guides & Reviews

Tourist Information for visitors to Belfast can be found on the [Belfast Welcome Centre](#) website. The Belfast Welcome Centre is located opposite the front of City Hall. For an overview of Northern Ireland: [NI Tourist Board](#). See also: [Tripadvisor Belfast](#) | [Yelp Belfast](#) | [In Your Pocket](#) |

Entertainment

Belfast Giants

[The Belfast Giants](#), Belfast's Ice Hockey team, play regularly at the Odyssey. The players are all Canadian.... Tickets available through www.ticketmaster.ie

Queens Film Theatre

Located on University Square, [QFT](#) plays host to a variety of independent, foreign and arthouse films, has its own bar/cafe, offers student discounts and is a favourite place for ISE students.

Crescent Arts Centre

Just down the road from Queen's University, Crescent Arts runs classes on everything creative you can think of and has a programme of events throughout the year.

Movie House

[Movie House](#) cinema is the main central multiplex, situated on Dublin Road. Tickets only £3.50 on Crazy Tuesdays!

The Black Box

[The Black Box](#) is in the Cathedral Quarter is a great venue for live music, film, readings, and comedy. Leans toward the indie side of things.

The Empire

[The Empire](#) is on Botanic Avenue. Lots of cover bands play there as well as a comedy club on Tuesday nights.

Theatres

[Grand Opera House](#) | [Waterfront Hall](#) | [Lyric](#) | [Crescent Arts Centre](#) | [The MAC](#)

Festivals

Belfast has dozens of festivals every year. Here's a run-down of some of the best:

[Belfast International Arts Festival](#) | [West Belfast Festival](#) | [Open House Festival](#) | [Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival](#) | [Belfast - Nashville Singer/Songwriter Festival](#) | [Imagine Ideas and Politics Festival](#)

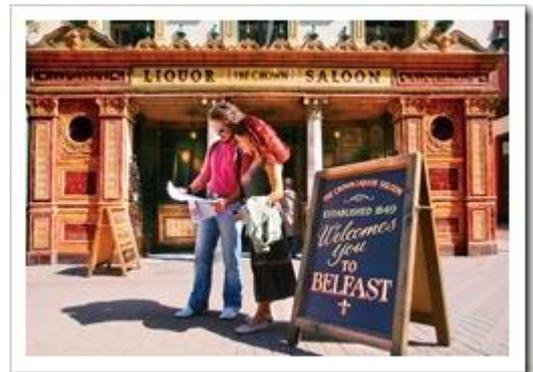
Markets

[St George's Market](#) is a popular meeting place and features crafts, local produce, artisan stalls, food and music. It's located in East Bridge near the waterfront and Central Train Station, a few minutes' walk from the City Hall. In May and December a continental market sets up in the grounds of the City Hall. Crescent Arts has a monthly arts and craft market.

Pubs

Belfast has some great pubs, but if you're not familiar with pub culture here, it's better to stick to the best ones in city centre.

Note: It's best to not wear any sports jerseys into any pub (at least until you get to know the city a bit better).



John Hewitt

Duke of York

Cathedral Quarter
Donegall Street

McHugh's

Custom House Square

The Spaniard

Cathedral Quarter, just off Waring Street by the Merchant Hotel. Tiny, but class.

Madden's

Kelly's

Behind Castle Court shopping centre.
Great places for live, traditional Irish Music.



Visiting Dublin

See [Trinity's guide to student life](#). For somewhere to stay for a night or two check out [bedandbreakfasts.ie](#) which lists inexpensive hotels and B&Bs near Trinity.

Transport

[Translink](#) operates most trains and buses in Northern Ireland. Look out for the Enterprise Belfast to Dublin same day return rail fare - see [webfare specials](#). Pre-book 3 days in advance to get the deal. Both Translink and [Aircoach](#) operate 24 hour coach services to Dublin city centre and Dublin Airport.

Air Travel

Please see our Guide for International Students for information on getting to Belfast.

Shipping

[NI Parcels](#)

[Postage Supermarket](#)

[Parcel Monkey](#)

[Seven Seas](#)

Yoga Classes

[Namaste Yoga Studio](#) on the Ormeau Road provides classes in yoga, well-being and meditation.

Broadband & TV

[BT](#) and [Virgin Media](#) offer 9 month student contracts with high speed broadband and TV. Virgin is one of the few providers which doesn't require you to take line rental with their package. Go through the student team to get student-friendly contracts. In a shared house you will probably split the cost between you, making it relatively cheap.

Mobiles

[Tescos](#) and [Giffgaff](#) are two examples of inexpensive mobile phone providers in the UK. You can get lots more tips by checking out online comparison sites e.g. [SavetheStudent](#).

Money Saving Tips and Deals

[Money Saving Expert](#) is an excellent online resource for finding the best deals on a whole range of UK products, services and utilities. Don't forget that student deals and software downloads are available through Trinity's [IT Services](#).

International Calls

It is best to use a free service such as [Skype](#) or [Facetime](#) although remember this is only free if both you and the person you are speaking to are calling online. Visit [Call Checker](#) for more options.

TV Licence

The UK requires each address to hold a TV licence if you watch or record live TV as it finances public programming such as BBC. Recently this has been extended to include the BBC iPlayer on demand and catch up service. For more information for students, visit [TV Licensing](#).