

A problem shared



Your Union Advice newsletter – a little bit of help when you need it most

Issue 16 (Sept 2022)

A Sense of Belonging by your Union President Owen Marques

First of all... Welcome! The start of your year will be an important one and what better way than to have a warm welcome from your Union - the people who are always looking out for the best interest of the students and making sure you find your place here at the University of Derby. For many of you this will be a scary first experience and there are a lot of feelings that accompany this, I'm hoping I can reassure you that there is a place for you here.

I personally understand the importance of creating those first connections and establishing your place at university, and as we embark on Freshers Fortnight we want to set off on the right foot by facilitating those spaces to make you feel a part of something that is ever-growing and become a part of the community here at the Union of Students.

At the risk of sounding biased, I'm hoping that from my experience many of you can learn where you can get the most out of your university experience, and like many people before me you'll soon realise why being apart of a community will benefit you.

I started off by not getting involved in much other than academics and socializing with my halls mates, which isn't necessarily a bad thing and it's safe to say I had a fun year, but I knew there was so much more for me to get involved with. I didn't join a sport until my second year, meaning I missed out on an entire year of meeting even more likeminded people. When I did eventually join, I realized I was part of a much bigger community – the Union.

This opened me up to so many opportunities and unforgettable experiences, which eventually got me to where I am today as the Union President, all because I know the value that the community can bring and I want to give back to a community that supported me so much.

A Community Where You Belong...

The Union and the University always strives to make as much of an inclusive environment as possible, and this is more important than ever given the disconnected few years we all experienced. With that being said, it all starts with you, but sometimes it can be difficult to know where to start:

Get involved with Union events!

We offer so many events throughout the year where you can meet likeminded individuals, stay in the know by following the Union social media accounts (@DerbyUnion) or checking out the Union website - and if you haven't already, check out the Freshers events! Freshers (derbyunion.co.uk)

Sports, Societies & Student Led Services

This is by far the easiest way to get involved with a community of people that have the same interests as you, there may be hobbies and interests that you can already get involved with, but don't let that limit you, the Union is your oyster and it's up to you what you get involved with. Even if you don't find yourself being a "sporty" individual you can find that a society or a student led service is better fit for you.

Imposter syndrome who?

This is a particular feeling many people might be feeling throughout their journey at university, but you have earned the right to be where you are now. Surrounding yourself with likeminded people will only help you feel more a part of the University.

We are here to listen

If you find yourself not fitting in or finding a community that represents you, the Union is here to change that, so talk to us and help us grow with you!

Contact us:

Tel: +44 (0) 1332 591 507

Email: info@derbyunion.co.uk

I really hope this gives you the best possible start to the year and that you find your place here at the University of Derby like so many others have, just be sure you get involved and the Union will be with you every step of the way.



Combating Loneliness

It's no secret that the Coronavirus pandemic has had a massive impact on people's mental health and this includes people feeling more lonely and isolated. According to a study carried out by the Office of National Statistics one in four students will experience loneliness whilst at university. That's a really high percentage, especially when you consider that Derby has going on 20,000 students. So what can you do to help combat loneliness?

Thankfully the answer is - lots of things! Starting University can be a very daunting journey but at the Union we have lots of suggestions and tips for helping you to navigate your way through. When you first mention you're going to university, one of the big bits of advice people always give is 'join a sports team or society'. It may sound cheesy, but our societies really do offer the chance to meet likeminded people and form a community, and we have something for everyone! From Midwifery to Medieval Re-enactment, you will likely be able to find something that piques your interest, and if not - you can start one!

When you're feeling lonely, it can be really easy to get into a funk and cut yourself off from others, so having regularly scheduled society meetings and socials can help to give you a reason to get out of the house. Our clubs and societies offer 'give it a go' sessions in the first few weeks of term and these are the perfect opportunity to go along and see whether it's for you. There will be plenty of people there looking to make new friends and these sessions are designed to get to know each other in a low-pressure environment, whilst still finding out what the club or society has to offer.

We have lots of fun sports clubs, societies and student led services for you to get involved in. You can find all the options we currently have available at derbyunion.co.uk/getinvolved. Have a chat or email the committees and try out as many as you feel able to.

There are also options to get involved with the Union by becoming a student officer. We're running a snap election **NOW** with nominations closing on the 4th October at midnight. This is a great way to integrate yourself more with your cohort and have a real impact. Check out our website to find now about this opportunity derbyunion.co.uk/getinvolved/elections



House Party!

Come along to our house party!

This is our second year running this event and it's a valuable opportunity to talk to the Union about all of your housing needs, from checking contracts to finding accredited accommodation.

There will be food, drink, love music, goodie bags and games so make sure you keep an eye out for more information. The house party will take place on **November 1st** and you keep updated on all of the exciting plans via our social media challenge and on our website.

New Legal Triage Clinic

Exclusively for University of Derby students

Do you have a legal issue that you require advice about?

Book an appointment with the Centre's Legal Triage Clinic and we will see how we can help you or signpost you to alternative services. Every other Wednesday here at the Union of Students between 1.00pm and 5.00pm (term time only).

To book a 25-minute appointment, please contact the Union of Students either using the booking link derbyunion.co.uk/advice or by calling 01332 591507

2022 Dates

Wed October 12th
Wed October 26th
Wed November 9th
Wed November 23rd
Wed December 7th

2023 Dates

Wed February 15th
Wed March 1st
Wed March 15th
Wed March 29th
Wed April 12th
Wed May 10th

Bringing your car to university?

Here's expert advice on how to prepare

Experts at Moneybarn have provided ten tips for students who are considering taking their car to university, including what to prepare and check for, as well as how to get around smoothly!

2 Calculate your monthly budget for insurance and fuel costs

Ensure your chosen policy is within your monthly budget. Moving to university means keeping a closer eye on your finances is essential, so it might also be worth calculating the distance between your accommodation to your university or place of work to find out how much you'll roughly be spending on fuel each month. Once you've got a rough figure, compare this to your monthly budget to see what you can realistically afford to be spending each month.

3 Do the relevant safety and security checks

It's important to regularly check fluid levels, battery condition, lights and the pressure and tread on your tyres to ensure your car is road safe. Always be mindful of leaving valuable items on display whenever leaving your car, and consider getting a steering lock for your vehicle.

4 Work out the distance to your local petrol stations

It's important to familiarise yourself with the local area and make sure you're aware of how far away the nearest fuel station is when you're in need of a last-minute fill-up. It's also worth downloading a fuel station locator app such as 'Petrol Prices' to check all your local garages' price data to find out where is offering the cheapest fuel at that time. Simply log on, enter your postcode and they'll display the cheapest fuel prices in your area!

5 Check your accommodation's policy on parking spaces

This is super important. You may need to register your vehicle to be entitled to free parking at your accommodation, however, this can differ for each university and accommodation properties so it's best to double-check. If you're living in a residential area, check if you will need a parking permit to avoid being lumped with any fines.

6 Familiarise yourself with your university car park

Usually the closest car parking options near your university will be advised - or the university will provide its own. Check whether you need a parking permit or familiarise yourself with the local parking rates. You may be able to get this from your Students' Union or the local council. You may also be able to get a discount for student parking rates, but you'll need to register your vehicle, so ensure you have the relevant passes/documentation.

7 If possible, do a trial run from your accommodation to your university

When your university schedule is confirmed, check if your lectures or seminars coincide with any rush hours, so you know when to leave extra time for your journey. Avoid any city centre car parks if possible too, as these fill up quickly and can delay your journey significantly while trying to find a parking spot. Calculate the distance between the university and your family home too - you never know when you will need this in an emergency!

8 Don't be scared to ask for fuel contributions

If you're the only member of your household with a car, you may end up becoming the designated driver for the weekly shop. Consider carpooling with your friends and asking for a contribution to the cost of fuel. They'll be getting a lift for significantly less cost than alternative public transport, at a time more convenient to them, and this will help towards your everyday costs. Remember to check your tyre pressure and encourage passengers to wear seatbelts as designated driver, keeping safety in mind at all times.

9 Update the address on your driver's licence

Depending on how far away your university is, you may wish to update your address on your driver's licence. Whilst university students can keep their parent's address on their licence, if you aren't planning to travel home often, you can change this to your student address via the DVLA's website for free. It's a legal requirement to keep the information on your driver's licence up-to-date.

10 Be sensible and plan ahead

Whilst driving unleashes a new sense of freedom that you should enjoy, remember to never risk your life or others! Take care when driving, and don't rush when parking. Some of the most common driving offences include speeding, using your mobile phone whilst driving, and using a vehicle with defective tyres. Never get behind the wheel if you're over the legal limit, and allow enough time for alcohol to have left your system before using your car the next day - even if you feel fine, you can still fail a breathalyser if too much alcohol remains in your system. If you are going to drink the night before, adjust your plans the following day.



FREE Condom Postal Service from the NHS

Your Sexual Health Matters provides a free and confidential condom and lube by post service to people who live in Derbyshire and Derby City.

Packs are sent in a discrete plain envelope with a plain postmark and will fit through a letter box.

They will process one order per month per person.

For more information, please visit:
yoursexualhealthmatters.org.uk/contraception/condoms/postal-condoms



The Hollie Guard app is best described as a digital personal alarm. Instead of carrying an extra device with you, Hollie Guard is an app on your smartphone that can help keep you safe.

The free plan will allow you to add trusted contacts, raise alerts, track a journey, monitor a meeting, record audio and visual evidence and send accident alerts.

To activate the app, you just shake or tap your device which will notify you chosen contacts, pinpoint your location and activate camera and microphone to record potential evidence.

hollieguard.com

Improve the advice service

Any ideas on how to improve your advice service, we'd love to hear them.

Either pop them onto the ideas forum via derbyunion.co.uk/ideas or contact us directly using the contact details below.

Live Chat

The Advice Team are now available through the Live Chat function on the Union website for quick guidance and information

derbyunion.co.uk/advice/livechat/

Your Union's independent advice service

Contact us on 01332 591507 if you need advice or help or email advice@derbyunion.co.uk

derbyunion.co.uk/advice