

Making the Transition to University

A PLANNING GUIDE FOR PARENTS & SUPPORTERS OF
INCOMING FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS TO KING'S



UNIVERSITY OF
KING'S
COLLEGE • HALIFAX
CANADA

In association with Dalhousie University

A LETTER FROM KING'S PRESIDENT TIM VINE



Dear Parent or Supporter,

At King's, we are committed to the success and well-being of our students.

We understand how important their transition to university is to their success and well-being in and beyond their first year of studies. We are deeply grateful for the many contributions parents and other supporters make to a successful transition experience. And we welcome the opportunities we will have to work with you in helping your King's students to thrive.

Our team has created this guide to assist you in the role you will play in supporting your student through their first year of university. Our hope is that it makes important information readily available in a single reference document that you might otherwise have to go looking for in different places. We also hope it will enable us to work together in supporting your student as they experience the different phases of their first year at King's.

I look forward to welcoming you and your student to the King's community in the joy of a new academic year. In the meantime, I hope you and your student are enjoying the fun of summer and the shared excitement of a new beginning for them and you at King's.

Warm regards,

President Tim
President and Vice-Chancellor

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of King's College sits on the unceded Mi'kmaw territory, subject to the Peace and Friendship Treaties that are the basis for peaceful coexistence and good relations among all who live in Mi'kma'ki.

The University of King's College recognizes the histories, contributions and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people who have been here for over 400 years.

INTRODUCTION

September is a time of transition. If you're reading this guide, someone you know is probably beginning an exciting new step of their journey by joining the University of King's College.

As a family member or supporter, you will play an important role in helping your student adjust and thrive in a new environment. Increased freedom and responsibility may bring mixed emotions, and this is a time of change for families and supporters as well.

This guide was created to support you through some of the unique changes you and your student may be experiencing this fall. We have created it to offer some guidance and tips about the adjustment to university life as your student joins our community at King's.

ADJUSTING TO UNIVERSITY

All new students will go through an adjustment period during this time of transition. Everyone is unique and will cope with this change differently. Here are some of the areas where you and your student may experience some changes this fall:

New spaces

The adjustment to King's will mean a new space for learning and may also bring a new living and social space for your student. This brings many changes, including a style of instruction and classroom learning that is different from what your student may be familiar with from high school.

New ways of learning

The first year is all about learning new strategies to thrive in a more rigorous and independent learning environment. Even for students who learned the required study and writing skills in high school, there is often more self-discipline and organization required at the university level.

New responsibilities

Many students welcome the increased freedom that university and living independently may bring. However, not all are prepared to take on all the new responsibilities that come along with this freedom. For many students, this might be the first time they are responsible for buying their groceries, transporting themselves to school and work, budgeting and taking care of their own health needs.

BEFORE ARRIVAL

Your student may feel nervous and excited about the transition to King's. Here are some things to consider before the school year begins to make the change as smooth as possible:

- ☒ Ask your student what they feel most nervous about, and encourage planning in advance for how they expect to deal with this. For example, if they are nervous about making friends, they might commit to attending at least one campus event per week, or if they are nervous about the first assignment, they might come up with a work plan for when, how and where they will begin working on the assignment.
- ☒ Students living on- and off-campus should have tenant insurance, which can cover the cost of lost or damaged belongings as well as alternative accommodations if a living space becomes unsuitable. Check with your home or auto insurance provider to see if they offer tenant insurance, or check out options through major banks.
- ☒ Encourage your student to make a packing list. Remember to include often-forgotten items like pain relief medication, cleaning supplies and stationery.
- ☒ To stay in touch, we encourage you and your student to follow us at [@ukcresidence](#) and [@ukchalifax](#) on Instagram.
- ☒ Remind them to book an appointment at the [Dalhousie Student Accessibility Centre](#) if they need academic accommodations due to a disability, ADHD or other accessibility considerations.
- ☒ Encourage your student to complete the Orientation and Consent and Respect modules on [Brightspace](#). These modules will take a couple of hours to complete, and are designed to help people think about how they can benefit from—and contribute to—a living and learning community where everyone can thrive.
- ☒ Discuss financial literacy and budgeting with your student. If you're looking for somewhere to start, here's a [comprehensive resource from the Government of Canada](#).
- ☒ If you're coming to Halifax with your student for move-in day, carve out some time to stop by the [Central Library](#), the [Public Gardens](#), parks and coffee shops that your student may want to visit while they are studying here. We encourage students to integrate with the broader Halifax community and get their bearings within the city.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- ☒ Talk to your healthcare provider about coming up with plans to support continuity of care for your student and make use of existing supports or those available through the university.
- ☒ Make sure your student's immunizations are up to date. For more information, visit Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness [Immunization Checklist](#).
Please note: students must [create a health profile online](#) before booking their first appointment with Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness.
- ☒ Get familiar with services available on campus. Your student can access medical services and short-term counselling at [Dalhousie](#), as well as [social work](#) and [peer support](#) services at King's.
- ☒ Through their membership in the [King's Students' Union \(KSU\)](#), students are automatically enrolled in a [health insurance plan](#). If you have equivalent coverage for your student, they can [opt out](#) between **August 11, 2026 and October 8, 2026**.
- ☒ If you think your student might benefit from counselling, consider setting up private mental health services before you arrive. Remember that many therapists and psychologists are licensed with the province they reside in, and your student may need to switch practitioners. The student health insurance plan has some coverage of counselling per school year, if private mental health services are helpful to you.
- ☒ If your student takes any medication, fill their prescription before you come. If your student takes ADHD medication, there is extra planning required. Once they arrive, Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness will require a copy of their psychoeducational assessment or a physician's letter to prescribe medication—ADHD medication is a controlled substance in Nova Scotia. Your student will have to sign an agreement and get prescriptions from their doctor every thirty (30) days.
- ☒ King's students pay a separate medical fee to Dalhousie for health services, so even if they opt out of the insurance plan, they can access any services at [Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness Centre](#).
- ☒ For campus safety announcements, campus closures, parking information, campus maps and more, your student can download the [DalSAFE app](#).
- ☒ To stay up to date on health and wellness service information, your student can follow [@DalStudentHealth](#) and [@ukcpeersupport](#) on Instagram.

STUDENT LIFE AT KING'S

King's has a vibrant array of extracurricular options. The fall is a great time to encourage your student to get involved with on-campus activities that interest them; there's something for everyone!

Societies

Almost every King's student participates in a [society or campus group](#)—there are many options available, from the King's Theatrical Society to the King's P.R.I.D.E Society, to the Loaded Ladle, which provides free hot meals for students at King's and Dalhousie. There is also the Day Students' Society, for students who don't live on campus. Students often find that connecting with a society or two helps them to develop community outside of the classroom and learn more about topics of their choosing.

Traditions

King's is home to many [traditions](#) throughout the academic year. In September, students participate in Matriculation, where new students are formally welcomed by signing the Matricula, which dates back to 1803! Other traditions throughout the year include Classics on the Quad, Big Night, the President's Hike, Formal Meals and Encaenia.

Athletics

King's has eight varsity sports teams and a large selection of non-competitive athletic programming, including yoga and dance. There are many opportunities for students to [get involved in campus athletics](#); there is also a gym right on King's campus, in addition to students' free access to the [Dalplex](#).

Campus employment

One out of three students work at an on-campus job during their time at King's. Opportunities range from campus tour guides to facilities summer staff positions, to front desk staff and peer advising positions. Tell your student to keep an eye on the [Student Employment webpage](#) throughout the year if they're interested in learning new skills and earning some spare income.

Experiential learning

King's is home to many [experiential learning opportunities](#) for undergraduate students. Among them are work-integrated learning, fieldwork experiences, applied in-course learning, entrepreneurship opportunities and more. Students have many opportunities to learn real-world skills during their studies.

Chapel and Choir

The [King's Chapel](#) is a place for students of all faiths—or none—to quietly reflect, hear beautiful music and join a vibrant community. King's has two choirs—the [Chapel Choir](#) and the [King's Chorus](#), for students who are musically inclined.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Here is a calendar with some information about what you might expect for the upcoming year, what your student may experience and what you can do to help.

Remember that every first-year experience is unique—your student may have different timelines or emotions. Be flexible, supportive and understanding as they do their best to navigate many changes.

Month	What might your student experience?	What you can do to help
September	• Many large adjustments, including living in residence or on their own, new classes, new friends and navigating campus • Potential for homesickness • Many opportunities to get involved on campus • Some large expenses, including housing costs, books, tuition and other expenses • Enthusiasm to learn new things	• Ask your student how often they would like to talk—they might not have time to talk or text every day. Agree on a frequency that works for them and do your best not to “crowd” them • Encourage them to explore new activities and meet new people • Encourage them to apply for bursaries if worried about finances. Find out more at our Bursaries webpage • Offer support by listening non-judgmentally • Ask your student what their version of success for the year looks like
October	• Mid-term exams and assignments begin • Finding their way into new social settings and friendships • Learning to live with a roommate, which brings excitement and challenges • Figuring out how to stay in touch with pre-university friends and partners • Finding their place at university	• This can be a great time to send a care package. For information on sending packages to residences, visit page 13 • Reassure them that their worth is not tied to their grades! • Encourage your student to meet new people and try new societies or events • Residence applications open on October 1. Encourage your student to apply early if they want to live in residence next year
November	• Finding writing and study habits that work for university • Workload increases • Cold and flu season • Continuing to build friendships and meet new people • Learning to budget responsibly as the term goes on	• Be as supportive as you can during this stressful time, but understand if your student can’t talk frequently • Encourage them to get their flu shot at Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness • Be understanding and supportive if your student encounters academic difficulties

WHAT TO EXPECT

Month	What might your student experience?	What you can do to help
December	• Excitement of seeing pre-university friends and partners • Excitement or nervousness about the holidays • Shorter days with less sunlight may affect mood or mental health • Stress about final exams • Sadness about leaving new friendships over the break • Possible loneliness for students not returning home for the break	• If your student returns home for the break, remember that they are used to being independent and give them the space they may need • If they have friends spending the holidays alone, consider inviting them to spend time with your family • Remind them that mental health resources are available on campus and remotely
January	• Homesickness may continue • Disappointment or satisfaction with fall term grades • Reunited with new friends and peers at school • Planning for next year, including finding housing and roommates	• Encourage your student to take advantage of "new year" energy to get involved in new activities and societies • Support them to set new goals based on their first semester experience • Remind your student that they are worth more than their grades
February	• Feelings of isolation or depression during the winter months • Learning how to cope with school stressors in a healthy way • Creating routines that allow for balance of school, sleep, friends and relaxation	• Encourage them to make the most of their spring break time • Encourage fresh air, nutrition and exercise to combat any seasonal blues • Consider sending another care package
March	• Longer days may provide a mood boost, and warmer temperatures encourage students to get outside • Academic stress may be quite high at this time of year • Concerns about finding summer employment and deciding where to live	• Understand if your student is busy and has less time to talk • Encourage them to seek academic advising before registration opens for the next academic year • Be as supportive as you can about housing and employment decisions for the summer and beyond
April	• Energy and excitement as spring draws nearer and first year comes to a close • Final exam anxiety • Excitement and apprehension about summer plans • Sadness about leaving new friendships	• Congratulate them on finishing their first year of university! • Celebrate what they achieved according to your student's definition of success (e.g. making new friends, getting involved on-campus, reading certain texts, etc.)

EASING THE TRANSITION

There are a few things you can do as a supporter to ease the transition for your student, including:

- Encourage your student to get involved in extracurricular activities. King's has many [societies](#) and [events](#) running throughout the year, including the King's Students' Union, Day Students' Society for those living off-campus, the Wellness Society, King's P.R.I.D.E. Society, the King's Theatrical Society and more. Societies and extracurriculars can help your student to meet new people, de-stress and get involved in their community—all of which are things that can help feelings of homesickness, overwhelm or loneliness.
- Learn to release control. The first year can bring many challenges, and your student is finding independence in new ways. If you disagree with the choices they make, try to take a step back and trust your student to use their autonomy and judgement. You can still reassure them that you are there for them if they want your support, advice or a listening ear.
- Talk to your student about sleep hygiene and encourage them to aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night. If your student is having trouble sleeping, they can book an appointment with the [Student Support Advisor](#) to discuss strategies for better sleep.
- Encourage your student to spend plenty of time with friends, family and pets before they leave for university. Many students experience a period of homesickness in the fall semester. They may want to consider printing photos or writing a list of summer memories to look back on.
- Encourage your student to eat regular, balanced meals and do some kind of movement every day. There are many beautiful parks near campus, or they can check out the [King's gym](#) or [Dalplex](#) for free using their [DalCard](#).

ACADEMIC SERVICES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

My student and/or I need proof that my student is attending King's for a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP), insurance, bank loan, etc. purposes. How do I obtain a Confirmation of Enrolment?

Some agencies or institutions provide a specific form which requires the Registrar's signature. These include government loan documents, Program Information Forms and CPP forms. Please bring these to the Registrar's Office and we will prepare the documents for you to submit to the relevant body. Most other agencies such as providers of RESPs, bank education loans, lines of credit or external scholarships will gladly accept the online confirmation of enrolment form, which is available as a PDF through [Dal Online](#) that your student can print and save as needed.

What is the last day to add or drop classes if my student needs to adjust their schedule or course load?

The final day to add or drop classes for the 2026 fall term (without tuition implications) is **September 22**. After that date, students can withdraw from a course but there may be fees and/or tuition costs. Please contact Student Accounts at accounts@ukings.ca for more information. The final day to add or drop classes for the 2027 winter term (without tuition implications) is **January 25**.

When is the exam schedule posted and when is the exam period?

The exam schedule for the fall term will be posted in October. The exam period for the fall term is **December 11-20, 2026** and **April 15-29, 2027** for the winter term. Please do not book flights or make travel plans for the end of the term until you are certain of your student's exam schedule.

ACADEMIC SERVICES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

My student doesn't know what they want to study. Is this ok?

Most students don't know what they want to do during their first year. This is normal. Students are encouraged to book an advising appointment with the [Academic Services team](#) in the Registrar's Office to identify areas of interest and develop a degree plan. The Academic Advising team at King's is happy to refer students to other [academic supports](#) available on the King's and Dalhousie campuses, including but not limited to Study Skills & Tutoring programs, the Dal Writing Centre and the On-Track program.

My student has an IEP or learning accommodation. Who do they contact to arrange accommodations at King's/Dal?

The [Student Accessibility Centre](#) at Dalhousie is King's and Dalhousie's centre of expertise on student access, inclusion and accommodation support. Students can schedule an appointment with the Accessibility Centre by booking online, emailing access@dal.ca, registering for "Accommodate" via [Dal Online](#) or by phoning **902-494-2836**. It's recommended to arrange accommodations as soon as possible, even before the beginning of the term or as soon as a need is identified throughout the year. Remember that everyone is following the same schedule meaning that many people will be looking for accommodations in September. It's important to know that accommodations are not renewed automatically and must be submitted each academic term through the "Accommodate" software.

When will tax forms be available?

Tax forms will be made available on your student's [Dal Online](#) account at the end of February.

TUITION & FEE PAYMENT

Methods of payment include debit card; cheque; money order; bank drafts and online banking.

King's and Dalhousie universities do not accept payments by credit card for tuition fees and residence fees.

King's students applying for Canada Student Loans and Provincial Loans must have the loans made out to The University of King's College as the official institution.

If you plan to pay for tuition and residence fees by cheque, only one cheque is required.

Internet banking is currently set up with TD, CIBC, BMO, RBC, Scotiabank and the Credit Union and is done as a direct bill payment setup with one's personal bank account. Please use the following information, and note the transaction can take up to 2-3 business days to be fully processed:

- Add Payee*: The University of Kings College
- Account: Student ID Number (B0*****)
- Amount: Amount you wish to pay

*Since each bank is different, it is best to search 'University' to locate us in the bank.

NOTE: King's and Dalhousie do not accept Interac e-mail money transfers.

Students are encouraged to check their student account balance as all payments are the sole responsibility of the student. To avoid the \$50 late fees and interest, all tuition and fees and, if applicable, residence costs, must be paid in full by the term due date.

Interest is 12% per year. Please note that money transferred to a student's account is not to exceed the annual charges associated with tuition and ancillary fees. Funding for off-campus and personal expenses is to be sent directly to the student. Over-payment on a student's account will be held on the account for up to one academic year for future fees.

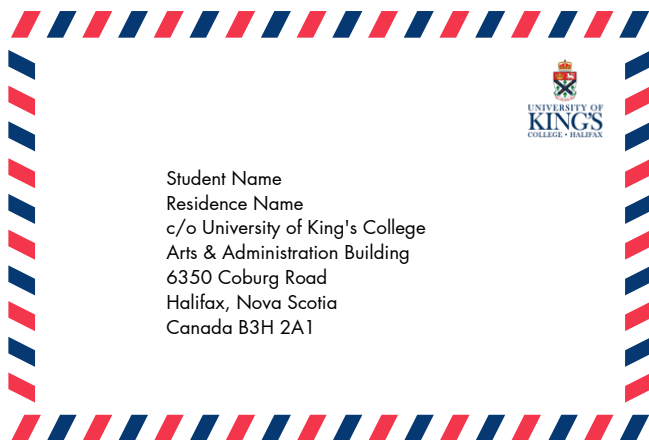
To find answers to other frequently asked questions about student accounts (other payment methods, term due dates, how to check one's balance owing, freedom of information and protection act, tuition tax receipts etc.), please visit our [Payments Guide](#).

To contact Sharlene Salter, Student Accounts Officer at the King's Student Accounts Office, feel free to email her at accounts@ukings.ca or by phoning **902-422-1271** ext. 116.

MAILING INFORMATION

Students living in residence on King's campus may receive mail and packages through our Reception Services.

Please ensure the envelope or package is addressed as follows:



Mail will be received and logged into the residence system under the student's registered name. Mail received for students with no name or residence will be returned to the sender. Do not send mail or order parcels to campus before your student moves into residence, as they will also be returned to sender. A 24-48 hour delay may occur in notifying the student of the received mail during peak activity times.

Any issues with mail or other Reception Services can be relayed to the President's Office at president.office@ukings.ca.

IMPORTANT DATES

Please visit the [Important Dates](#) page on the King's website for a full list.

Fall term	
August 23	Webinar for parents/supporters of incoming students
TBD	Accessibility webinar
September 2	International student orientation
September 4	Able @ Dal orientation for students with disabilities
September 6	Welcome day and move-in day for all incoming students
September 8	First day of classes (for non-Foundation Year Program (FYP) students)
September 9	First FYP lecture
September 22	• Residence and tuition fees due for the fall term • Last day to add/drop classes
November 9-13	• No classes • Fall study break
December 9	Last day of classes (fall term)
December 20	Last day of fall term exams <i>Please note that residence students must leave residence 24 hours after their last academic commitment. Please wait until exam schedules are released to make travel arrangements.</i>

IMPORTANT DATES

Please visit the [Important Dates](#) page on the King's website for a full list.

Winter term	
January 10	Residence reopens for winter term
January 11	Winter term classes begin
January 25	• Residence and tuition fees due for the winter term • Last day to add/drop classes
February 5	University closed for George III Day
February 15-19	• No classes • Winter study break
April 13	Last day of classes
April 29	Last day of winter term exams <i>Please note that residence students must leave residence 24 hours after their last academic commitment. Please wait until exam schedules are released to make travel arrangements.</i>

INCLEMENT WEATHER

As a coastal city, Halifax can experience tropical storms and hurricanes. Rest assured that King's has generators and emergency power supplies in the case of a power outage, and our team works to keep campus safe year-round. If your student is staying in residence, generators provide power even for extended power outages. Food service will continue in Prince Hall. Please note that Dalhousie provides internet to King's campus, so service may be impacted beyond King's control. We recommend that your student keep a supply of food and water stored safely in their room in case of emergencies and/or stock up when we are able to provide notice that a storm is imminent.

We encourage you to stay in touch with your student directly in the case of inclement weather. King's follows the decisions made by Dalhousie about weather-related closures, given that King's classes are listed as part of Dalhousie offerings. If you see that Dalhousie (Halifax campus) is closed for weather-related reasons, King's will also be closed.

Here is where you will find out if King's/Dal is closed:

- on CBC radio
- through an alert banner on ukings.ca
- on the main page of the [Dalhousie website](#)
- through Dalhousie's [DalSafe app](#)
- through an email to all students
- through an email to faculty and staff
- via King's social media (i.e. [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#))

We encourage all students to download Dalhousie's DalSafe app, which informs the community of all emergency notifications, including storm days. You can find more info on the app [here](#).

STUDENT PRIVACY

We understand that you are invested in your student's success while they are here at King's. However, in most cases, we are limited in the information we can share with you about your student.

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* protects personal information, including grades/transcripts, medical information, financial information, schedules and other personal information. If your student wants you to have access to their information, they will need to provide written consent to university staff before we release any information.

Should an emergency related to your student's well-being arise, their emergency contact will be informed. If you have further concerns, we encourage you to have open conversations with your student and allow them the choice to share information with you directly.

TIPS FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORTERS

- If your student is planning to work while living in Canada, know that it may take time for them to find a job. Remember that international students on a study permit can work a maximum of 20 hours per week during the school year.
- It is recommended to have a full eye and dental exam before coming to Canada, as these are not fully covered by most health insurance plans and can be expensive.
- Write down the time difference between your home and Canada, and schedule calls with your student to account for this difference.
- Encourage your student to get connected to the [International Centre](#), which offers advising, emergency bursaries, support with study visas, cultural events and other supports.
- [New to Dal](#) offers a checklist for international students, which we encourage you to review before arrival.
- International students are automatically enrolled in the [Dalhousie Student Union \(DSU\) International Health Plan](#). The DSU International Health Plan is for international students who don't have provincial health insurance. It covers general medical visits and emergency medical services. Before seeking medical care, students must contact Blue Cross at **1-833-867-3468** to confirm their coverage. To learn more about the coverage, make a claim or opt-out, visit the [Student VIP International website](#).
- Many international students are eligible for MSI, Nova Scotia's provincial health insurance. To learn more about accessing MSI coverage, visit [this page](#).

SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Does your student need help with their tuition fees, mental health, academics or another concern? Here are some starting points. Please encourage your student to reach out directly to these supports. To respect confidentiality, university staff cannot respond to parent/supporter inquiries with specific student information (see page 17 for more information).

Academic supports:

- [Academic Advisors](#)—registrar@ukings.ca
- [Academic Support Coordinator](#)—lucy.ofori@ukings.ca
- [Journalism Writing Coach](#)—allison.lawlor@ukings.ca
- [Writing Centre](#)—writngc@dal.ca

Student services:

- [Accessibility Officer](#)—michelle.mahoney@ukings.ca
- [Accessibility Centre](#)—access@dal.ca
- [Indigenous Support and Outreach Coordinator](#)—emily.roberts@ukings.ca
- [Chaplain](#)—ranall.ingalls@ukings.ca
- [Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness](#)—902-494-2171
- [Financial Aid](#)—accounts@ukings.ca
- [Good to Talk 24/7 Confidential Helpline](#)—1-833-292-3698
- [Student Health Insurance Plan](#)—coordinator@ksu.ca
- [Residence](#)—residence@ukings.ca
- [Interim Sexual Health and Safety Officer](#)—miriam.bonellomacquarrie@ukings.ca
- [Student Accounts](#)—accounts@ukings.ca
- [Student Support Advisor](#) (wellness and mental health)—socialwork@ukings.ca

**TO LEARN MORE, VISIT THE
[FOR PARENTS PAGE](#) ON OUR WEBSITE**



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