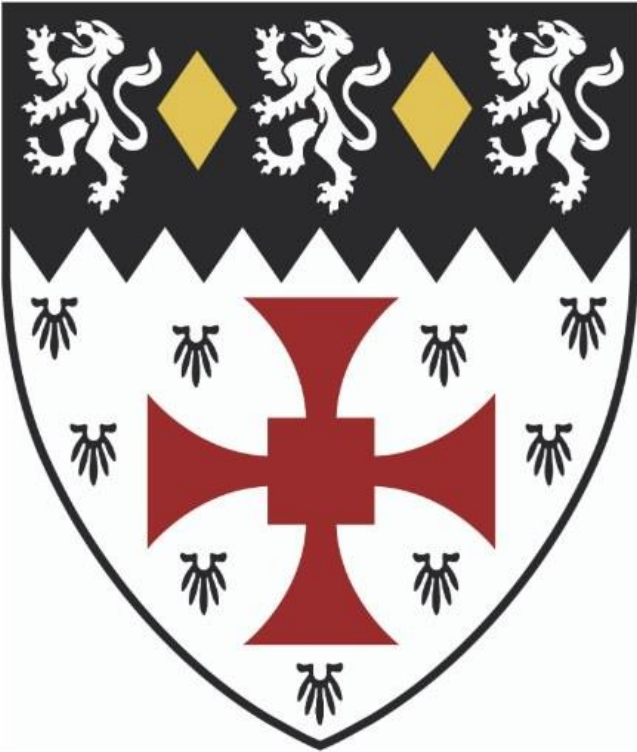




Ustinov College **GCR Handbook** 2020-2021

What is the GCR?



# Ustinov Graduate Common Room

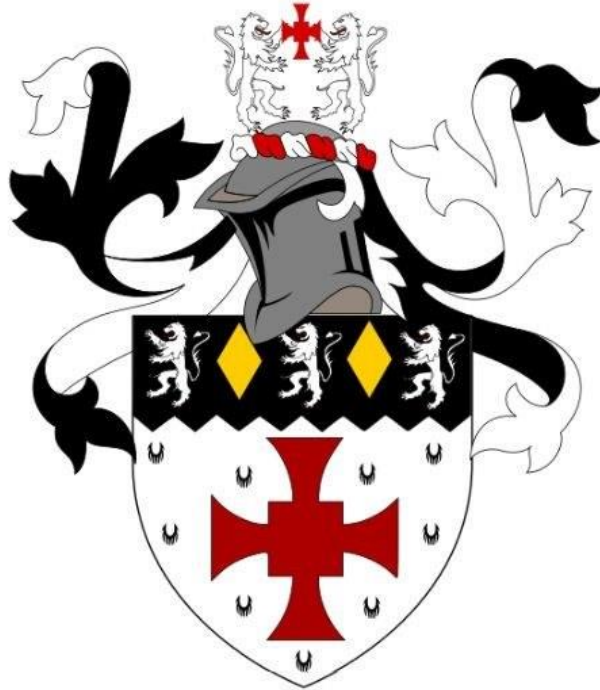


*1 - Acting Secretary, Chair and President at a General Meeting*

You are! The **Graduate Common Room** is the student body of Ustinov College. The **GCR** exists to:

- Represent students in College. This may include raising issues about accommodation, study space, the bar and café, and welfare.
- Increase the social activities and sense of community within College, with Induction Week events, formal dinners, day trips, parties and other events open to all **GCR** members.
- Support clubs and societies and provide them with funding.

- Provide regular entertainment for students. We run scheduled film nights, open mic nights, board game nights, and quiz nights.
- Many, many more things that you'll experience throughout the year.



# Ustinov GCR

*2 - Ustinov College Graduate Common Room*

All students at Ustinov college can become a member of the **GCR** by paying an annual levy, check here for more info on the levies <https://ustinovgcr.com/FAQs/>. This levy can be paid for either online through payments to the college or you can pay in the **GCR** office.

What do you get for your money?

- Heavily subsidised tickets for day trips, formal dinners, and the Ustinov Summer Ball.
- Free entry to the Ustinov Summer BBQ and many parties and events throughout the year.
- Funded clubs and societies, reducing the levy you have to pay to join and giving you the opportunity to set up a club or society!
- Access to the **GCR**'s very large, and ever-expanding, DVD and Blu-Ray collection.
- Access to the Observatory and music room.
- Representation by the team of volunteers who help run the **GCR**.

- The opportunity to get involved with the running of the **GCR** by voting at our general meetings and running for committee positions.

The **GCR** is run by the **GCR** Committee made up of about 30 **GCR** members, who are elected in June and October. If you think you have something to contribute, and would like to join in to make the student experience at Ustinov amazing, please come and speak to a member of the Committee about it during Induction Week, tweet us **@UstinovGCR**, follow us on Instagram **@ustinovgcr** or send an email to [chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)!

Welcome to Ustinov College



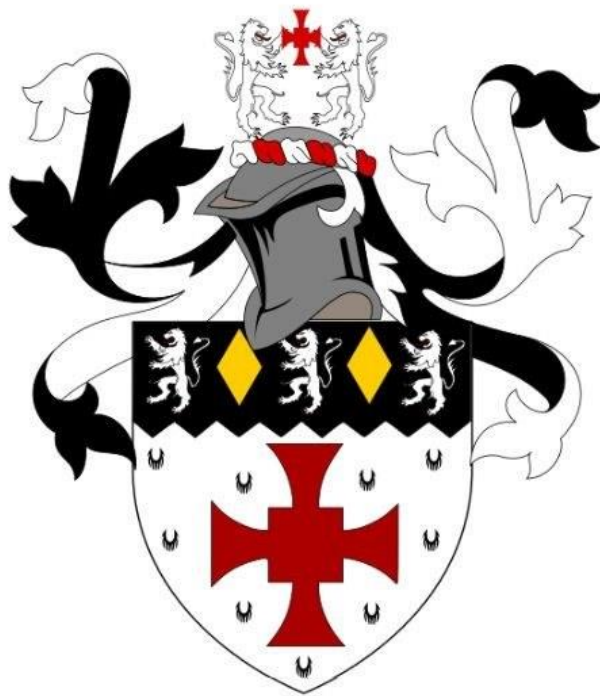


*3 - Diana Martinez-Trejo Ustinov College GCR President*

Let me introduce myself. My name is Diana and I was the President last academic year. I chose to continue with the hard work so that you can have the best student experience at Ustinov College. Like last year, this one will be a little bit strange, but believe me, when I tell you that the **Ustinov Graduate Common Room (GCR)** is here for you, we take it very seriously. So do not hesitate to contact us or even get involved in our big committee. During your time in Durham, you will have the opportunity to live in close proximity to a renowned World Heritage site and one of Britain's best-loved buildings, to make friends from all over the world, and to develop yourself personally and academically. Plus, though you might experience all four seasons in a single day, you should not worry too much about the infamous British weather.

Nonetheless, you have chosen to be part of the one and only postgraduate college at Durham University. Ustinov College has a lot to offer to everyone and I would advise you to give it a go and immerse yourself in College life whether you live in College or in the city. In a "normal" year, it can be daunting when you start the year without knowing anyone. Now if you add this challenging period, I bet you might feel a little bit nervous, but you will discover that Ustinovians are the warmest and friendliest bunch of people you could meet. Moreover, they are postgrads like you, and they will understand how you feel. Our best asset is our sense of community - a community of which you are now part. This community is made with lots of international students, so whether you come from Europe, Asia, Africa,

Australia, the Americas or even Antarctica, you will be very welcome. After all, our College motto is “**Diversitate Valemus**” — in other words, Diversity is our Strength.



## Ustinov GCR

Our mission at the **GCR** is to help you make the most of your time at Durham. You can become a member of the **GCR** by paying a levy which ranges from £1 to £35, for the full year. Differences between each are the benefits you are entitled to, for more information about the membership details, just check our website (<https://ustinogcr.com/>).

Covid-19 Update: as with the UK and most of the world, we are having to react to current events that are outside our control. As such, we are working to run a full social program – with government guidelines and social distancing in place. If you need help during this time, please take a look at our website ([ustinogcr.com](https://ustinogcr.com)) or feel free to contact us. Details for committee members can be found on the website too, alongside a huge amount of useful information. In addition to that, please do join the "Ustinov College 2020-2021" group on Facebook, where you can ask questions and keep abreast of College news. We are preparing lots of activities for you during the whole academic year, and I hope that you are looking forward to them.

So, I have talked about the **GCR**, and you might be wondering how exactly does the **GCR** work? Well, the committee is composed of students like you who volunteer and make things happen, and they are elected by fellow Ustinov students. If you have an idea to improve the GCR or fancy helping contribute to this wonderful Ustinov community, then do run for a position. Details for positions can be found on the website or you can always ask a member of the **GCR** Committee and we will be more than happy to talk to you. There will be elections soon after you arrive (in October), so keep your eyes peeled for the



nominations. Don't feel intimidated if you have never done such a thing before, there is always a first time for everything and we encourage everyone to get involved.

All that is left for me to say is: Welcome to Ustinov College and congratulations for getting into Durham University! The **GCR** is waiting to meet you!

## Meet the GCR Exec Committee



*President – Diana Martinez-Trejo*



*Chairperson – Connor Armstrong*



*Secretary – Brad Din*



*Clubs and Socs Officer – Christos Vlahos*



*International Students Officer – Muhammad Zulkify*



*Welfare Officer – Jake Brooker*



*4 - Peter Platypus - Our College mascot*

The **GCR** is run by volunteers elected from the student body at Ustinov College. Here are the current members of the **GCR** Executive Committee; keep an eye out for us during the Induction week! If you have any questions about life at Ustinov don't be afraid to ask, we are here to help!



5 - *PRESIDENT* - Diana Martinez-Trejo

Hi there! I'm Diana, a PhD student in Engineering in its final year and President of the **GCR**. As President, I represent all of you and fight for your interests to the College, University and local residents. Alongside this, I coordinate and manage the **GCR**'s committees. If you want to know more about the **GCR** or there is something you want to ask, feel free to contact me.

Email - [ustinov.president@durham.ac.uk](mailto:ustinov.president@durham.ac.uk)



6 - *Chair* - Connor Armstrong

Hi Everyone! I'm Connor, a 3rd year PhD student studying Mathematical Physics. I'm the Chair of the **GCR**, so it's my job to run our meetings and make sure we are living up to our commitments as a charity. I've been involved with the **GCR** for a while now so if you have any questions about our facilities or events then I can probably help.

Email - [chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)





*7 - International Student Officer - Muhammad Zulkifly*

Hello! I'm a 2nd year PhD student in Physics and the **GCR** Secretary. I'm responsible for keeping minutes for the meetings of both the Executive committee and the General Meetings of the entire student body. I've already been fortunate enough to spend 4 years in Durham for my undergraduate degree, so if you have any questions about this lovely city or the activities of the **GCR**, feel free to ask away!

Email - [secretary.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:secretary.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)

Hi! I am Muhammad, a first-year Islamic Finance student, and your International Student Officer for the **GCR**. I am responsible for helping the International students community to settle down in this wonderful city. I will also be organising a memorable daily trip around the North East. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or even suggestion for our future trip.

Email - [iso.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:iso.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)



*8 - Clubs and Societies Officer - Christos Vlahos*

Hello everyone! I'm a 4th year PhD student in Physics and the C&S Officer for the **GCR**. My job is to be responsible for all the societies we have in college and the gym. If you're interested in joining any of our societies or sports clubs (or even starting your own), don't hesitate to contact me. Similarly, if you have questions about our gym.

Email - [cs.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:cs.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)



*9 - Welfare Officer - Jake Brooker*

Hello and welcome to Durham! I'm Jake, a 2nd year PhD student in Psychology and I'm your Welfare Officer for the upcoming academic year! My role is to chair the Ustinov **GCR** Welfare Committee and

provide support and signposting for my fellow students towards relevant resources and services that one might need during any stage of their studies. Please get in touch if you feel you need anything.

Email - [welfare.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:welfare.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)



*10 - Livers Out Representative - Shreya Khandelwal*

Hello! I am Shreya, a Masters of Law (LLM) student at Durham, and the Livers out Rep for Ustinov College! It is my job to be a point of contact for all Ustinovians who are living out. So if you are a part of Ustinov but do not live in the college accommodation, I can help you out with making the college and its facilities more accessible for you! As liver out myself, I know the issues you may face while living out of college so feel free to ask away all that you like!

Email - [liversout.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:liversout.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)

Get involved with the GCR!



*11 - Volunteers and Exec on action*

The **GCR** has a varied set of committee roles to be filled by keen volunteers like YOU! If you want the chance to help improve the lives of other students, consider running for a committee position. If you don't have so much time to spare, you can also volunteer to help run our children's parties, perform at formals and other events and attend GCR meetings to pass budgets for all of these and much more besides.

We will be having a **General Meeting** on **Sunday 4th Oct**, as part of our Induction schedule. This will give you the opportunity to run for any open committee positions as well as hearing our exec telling you all



they've been doing to run Ustinov events and make our college better. We are still looking for a few more people to join our executive (and other committees).



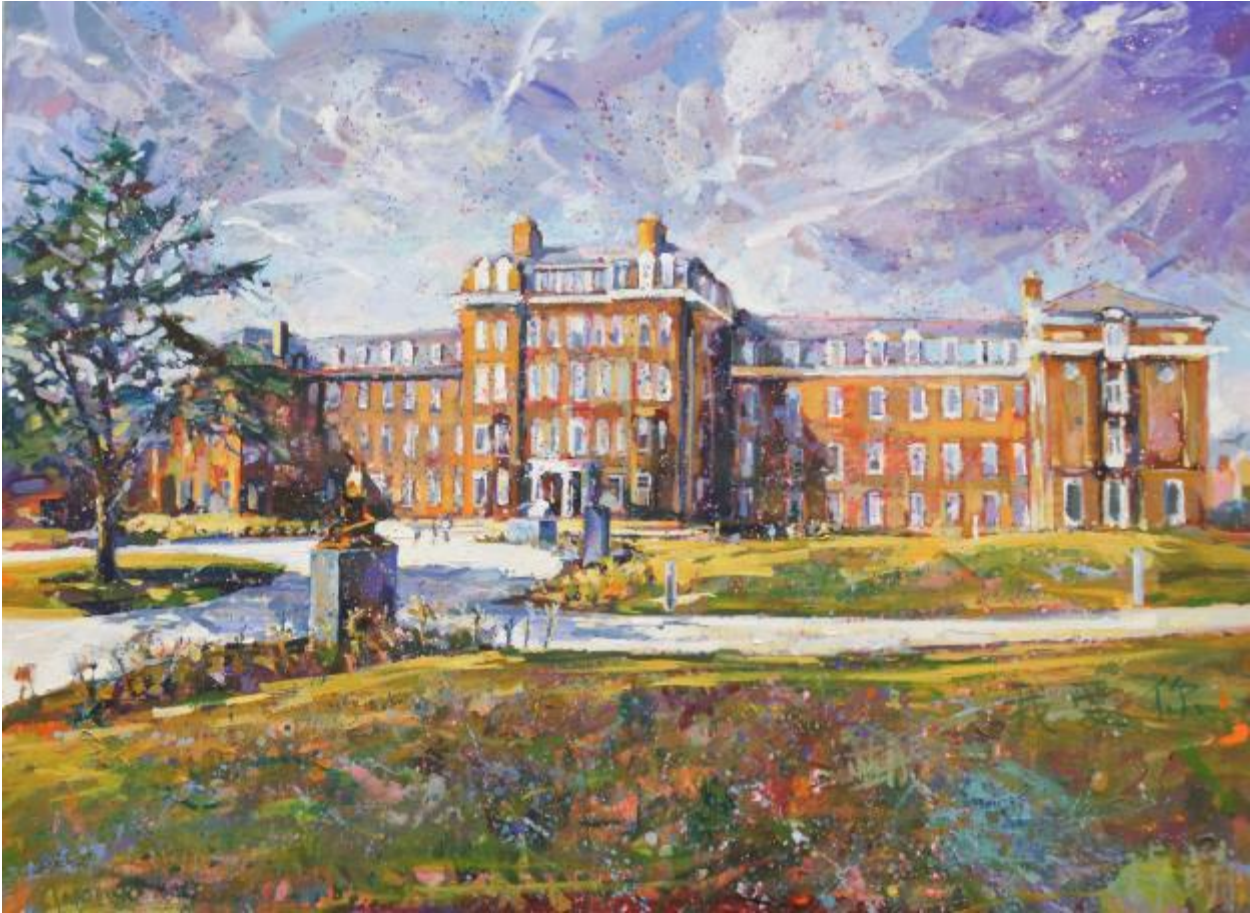
12 - GCR Website

Exec Roles include Vice-President, Treasurer, Communications Officer, Bar Steward, DSU Rep, Livers Out Rep and Social Secretary.

Other committee roles up for grabs include Press Secretary, Video Master, Ball Secretary, Dryburn Reps, Sheraton Reps, Eco-Reps, Sports Reps, LGBT+ Rep and many more!

Visit <https://ustinovgcr.com/officer-roles/> or email [chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk) for more info!

A brief History of Ustinov College





13 - "Strength in Diversity"

Durham University, founded in 1832, developed in both Durham and Newcastle until 1963, when the independent University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne was founded. Durham University, one of four universities in England that has the collegiate system, is based in the city of Durham and the nearby town of Stockton.

Ustinov College began life as the Graduate Society in 1965, founded by Professor of Geography **William B. Fisher**, to assist those postgraduate students who found it difficult to find a place in the other colleges. The number of students in the inaugural year of the society varies according to who you ask, but the most reliably-sourced figure is 94: 86 men and eight women, with a total of thirteen different nationalities represented. In its second year, membership nearly doubled to 170. Currently, Ustinov College is home to around 1,800 students from over 100 countries.



*14 - Sir Peter Ustinov*

In 2003, the Graduate Society changed its name to Ustinov College in honour of the University's then-Chancellor, **Sir Peter Ustinov**. A world-renowned Oscar-winning actor, he was also a long-time champion of international understanding and communication. In 2005, Keenan house was opened to provide further couples accommodation as well as family accommodation.

In 2017 Ustinov college began a move to its new home of Sheraton Park with the College split between the Howlands and Sheraton sites during the 2017/18 academic year. In 2018 the transition was completed and the college settled into its new location. Since 2019 Ustinov College added Brackenbury, located in front of Keenan house. At the moment we have two sites, Sheraton Park and Dryburn Court. With all these changes the GCR is working to return the sense of community among the college.

## A Beginner's Guide to Britain



Copyright Alison Taylor photography



15 - Peter Platypus at Whitby

Coming to a new country can be confusing. If you're joining us from overseas, here are some helpful tips for surviving in the land of cups of tea.

- **British weather** is unpredictable and it **rains frequently** throughout the year; many Brits like to keep a cheap umbrella in their bag. Temperatures may be lower than you're used to and it **snows during winter. Bring plenty of warm indoor and outdoor clothes.**
- The British tend to eat one dish per meal rather than three or four. Popular traditional dishes include **fish and chips, curry, and a Sunday roast.**
- **Cold water** from the taps of kitchen sinks is **drinking water** and needn't be boiled.
- **British humour** often involves sarcasm and irony, stating the opposite of what is meant. For example, if it is snowing outside with blizzard-like conditions and someone says, 'Marvellous weather', they are probably being **sarcastic.**
- The **British dress quite casually** and are fine with showing some skin. This is a cultural thing, so although this behaviour may be frowned upon in other cultures, it is considered acceptable in the UK. However, no matter what somebody is wearing, it is not acceptable to touch someone without their permission.



16 - Summer Ball 2019

- In the UK, we say '**please**', '**thank you**', and '**sorry**' in most interactions. British people will expect you to use these words as well, particularly when purchasing items in shops and bars. '**Cheers**' is a common substitute for 'thank you'.
- In the UK, there are some friendly terms of endearment that you may be called by people in shops, cafés and bars if they don't know your name, such as '**dear**', '**love**', and, especially in the North East, '**pet**'.
- Britain has a culture of going for a drink as recreation and relaxation. However, **going to a pub or bar doesn't require drinking alcohol.** The bar or pub is a social space for everyone.
- Most English people like their personal space. When greeting each other, even close friends may keep their distance. Don't be offended if you are offered a handshake rather than a hug or kiss. We like you really!

Most of all: **Don't worry!** The North East of England is a lovely, friendly place. If you have questions about British culture, please feel ask any of the **GCR Committee** members, tweet us [@UstinovGCR](https://twitter.com/UstinovGCR), or email [chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:chair.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk).

## Starter Guide to Durham



## Shops



Durham City centre offers a wide range of shops, from large national chains such as Tesco and Iceland to independent shops and stalls in Durham Indoor Market. Turn over the page to see the map of Durham with some of the more popular stores marked.

For those of you living in at Sheraton Park, the nearest shop is a Sainsbury's Local conveniently located about a 10-minute walk away.

For those who live in Keenan House or Brackenbury, the nearest shop is Co-Op, located about 15 minutes walk away.

There are larger, well-stocked supermarkets out of town: Tesco, Asda, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's and Lidl. They can be reached by car, taxi, or bus, or you can order online for delivery. Sainsbury's in the Arnison Centre is particularly handy for Dryburn residents.

### Opening Hours

Shops in Britain tend to be open from 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. during the week. Convenience stores may stay open till about 10:00 p.m. Shops close early on Sundays. Pubs and bars tend to serve until about 11:00 p.m. Nightclubs are open from about 10:00 p.m. till 2:00 a.m.

## Money



The main banks - HSBC, RBS, Lloyds TSB, and Barclays - all have branches in the centre of town. Lloyds TSB also has an ATM opposite the Durham Students' Union (Dunelm House) and there are plenty of



ATM's in the city centre too. When you set up an account, you will be asked for ID (e.g., passport, proof of address, proof of student status, etc.). If you are living in, take a letter from college confirming your address; if you are living out, a copy of your tenancy agreement should suffice.

All banks have cash machines (ATMs). The easiest cash machine to access from Ustinov is at the nearby Sainsburys local along the A167.

### Mobile Phones



It is worth noting that signal strength at Sheraton Park is acceptable on EE and O2.

Three offer a Skype-phone contract which may be attractive to overseas students. The cheapest network is Giffgaff.

### Takeaways/Take-out places



There are plenty of takeaways/take-out places in and around Durham. If you're hungry you can download the Uber Eats, JustEat or Deliveroo apps.

## Transport



17 - Arriva Bus

Durham is a small city. It is possible to walk to and from most places. If you need transport, however, the following services are available:

### Buses

Sheraton Park residents have access to the Number 7 bus from the A167 (opposite the entrance to Sheraton Park) into Durham bus station. These services run approximately every 20 minutes from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m Monday - Saturday, and from 9 a.m. until 11 p.m. on Sundays and holidays.

Dryburn residents can use the PR1 service which stops outside the Gates shopping centre, or Number 64.

If you are taking Arriva bus services (blue buses) you can ask for a “student day ticket” that just costs £1 (required to show your student card), this ticket gives you access to the Durham city area for the whole day (check Arriva Bus website <https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/>).



### Taxis

Below are only a few of the most widely-used taxi services. All taxis should display their tariffs, but as a guide, you shouldn't be paying more than £6 to £8 for a journey within Durham.

- Bill's: 0191 386 7450

- Paddy's: 0191 386 6662
- Polly's: 0791 017 9397
- Mac's Taxis: 0191 384 1329
- DC Taxis (Durham) Ltd: 0191 383 1122 (fares for Newcastle Airport from £35 each way)
- Airport Express: 0191 371 2352 (24-hour pick-ups) £30 to the airport, £20 for the return

### **Nightbus**

The nightbus is a service provided by the Durham Students Union for safe late-night transportation. It costs £2 per person per journey and operates from 9:00 p.m.–1:00 a.m. Monday through Saturday. Simply call 07922 648 802 to be picked up and dropped off within Durham City.

### [Durham Wider Map](#)

Embed://<iframe

src="https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/embed?mid=1I1I2PSBQzy3K7T4HF8Q4QxWr3zXYwhgF" width="640" height="480"></iframe>

### [Durham City Centre](#)

Embed://<iframe src="https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/1/embed?mid=1QcEcz-kIjqTwovl6tl7toncD71LATC3" width="640" height="480"></iframe>

## GCR Facilities at Sheraton



*18 - Sheraton Park Gym*

The **GCR** has a range of facilities at Sheraton Park, for use by **GCR** members. Our newly fitted high-tech **Gym** is located just after Porter's reception desk and can be accessed by your flat key-card (once you have purchased a gym membership from us). We also have extra space and a **music room** 5 minutes walk away, for more details see the Observatory page. There are also two **vending machines** by the gym entrance, offering cold drinks and snacks. Tell the VP/ Sheraton Reps if you have a snack request!



19 - Common Room at Sheraton Park

We boast one of the largest and most relaxing bar areas of Durham university! During the day, can be used as a study space. At night, the bar opens and has a huge variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Whatever your tipples, we should be able to provide it – the bar is especially well known for the extensive range of whiskies on offer. We also now offer **cocktails** and **mocktails**.

**BAR OPENING TIMES:**

19:30 - 00:00 Thursday - Friday

13:00 - 00:00 Saturday

(Late opening times during parties)



20 - "Los Patroncitos" at Ustinov Live

At any time of day, you can play a game or two on the league-standard **pool tables** (20p per game), the **foosball table** (free of charge) or perhaps a friendly game of **darts**. The Common Room also has a number of screens where you can enjoy free TV or connect your computer and stream something. We generally show all major sporting events (any other TV shows on request). The Common Room also

contains the GCR's collection of **board games**; as well as a small **book collection** to read, take and donate to.

The GCR also runs a **Film Night** and a **pub quiz** each week, and an **open-mic/karaoke night** several times a term.



21 - Neville House

In addition to the Common Room is the **Seminar Room** which is good for watching films or playing video games (the GCR office has **DVDs** and **Consoles** available to borrow/ use). Sometimes it even gets used for seminars! There are two laundrettes on the ground floors, one in Sheraton House and one in Neville House (speak to a porter about the Circuit Card you will need to top up and operate the laundry machines). There is also a **Community Room** in Neville's House, which can be hired through College should you wish to have a room for an occasion. The **Community Room** also has a **table tennis table** for general use and the **board games society** also meets here every Sunday.



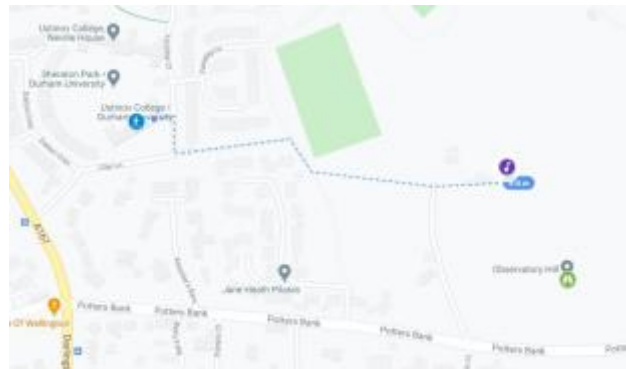
22 - GCR Office location

### Office Hours

For all queries, problems, or just a chat about anything at all, come find a GCR Committee member in the GCR Office in Sheraton House. The office is located immediately to your right as you enter Sheraton House, beside the porters' reception desk. Current committee members and office hours are also listed on our website, <https://ustinovgcr.com/>. The noticeboard in the corridor outside Sheraton bar displays photographs of the committee as well.

Office hours are usually 18:00-20:00 nightly, except on Fridays.

## The Observatory



The Observatory is a historic building just a five-minute walk away from College, on the path that leads you to **Observatory Hill** where you can have a fantastic view of **Durham cathedral**. Inside, we have access to two main rooms (**Fisher Room & Music Room**), a small kitchen, and a bathroom. The building is heated but has no WiFi.



*23 - The Fisher Room*

Fisher Room is immediately on your left as you enter the building. It is named after **Prof. Fisher** who founded the **Durham Graduate Society** in 1965, the predecessor organisation of our College. This multi-purpose common room contains comfortable sofas and is a nice space to relax or organise events in.



*24 - GCR guitars in the Music Room*

The Music Room is in the very back of the building. It contains various **GCR-owned musical instruments** such as pianos, guitars, and a drum kit. You can also bring your own instruments to practice here!



More information on usage times and booking can be found on the GCR website under <https://ustinovgcr.com/observatory/>!

## GCR Facilities at Dryburn



25 - Keenan House Common Room

Ustinov has a second site with college-owned accommodation up at **Dryburn Court**. Up until recently, this was mostly for couples and family accommodation; with **Keenan House** containing a large number

of self-contained 1-3 bedroom flats. There is also a **computer/ study room**, a **Common Room** with a TV and a small outside **playground** (for children).



*26 - Brackenbury Building*

**Dryburn** now has a second, newly-renovated building for single students: **Brackenbury**. Students here have access to the shared areas in **Keenan House** (like the **Common Room**) but each flat additionally has its own lounge space, separate from the kitchen for general social use.

All **Dryburn** residents are encouraged to come to GCR events held at **Sheraton** or throughout Durham. There will also be events held at the Dryburn Site. To get more involved, we recommend running for a **GCR Dryburn Rep** position to help us give you a better, inclusive experience.

## GCR Clubs and Societies



*27 - Peter Platypus involved in our Clubs and Societies!*

In order to get the full experience of being a Ustinovian, joining a society is a must! The GCR currently has 14 societies that offer a friendly environment to meet new friends and have fun during your time here. It is the perfect opportunity to take a break from your studies and try something new!

In general, our societies are split between competitive (Football, Basketball, Badminton, Pool and others) and non-competitive (Choir, Board Games, Tang Soo Do and others). Even though our sports clubs participate in college leagues against clubs from other Durham colleges, no previous experience is required; just motivation to have fun and learn something new. A full list of societies can be found on our website [ustinogcr.com](http://ustinogcr.com).

Can't you find what you're looking for? Setting up your own society is very simple! So if you have something on your mind that you'd like to make a reality email [cs.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:cs.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk) to find out how.

However, it's reasonable to expect this year will be different. We're still quite unsure how the current situation will affect our clubs but we'll try our best to make your experience here as engaging and fun as possible!



28 - Men's Basketball: Men's Basketball team after their win against Loughborough in the varsity games.



29 - Ultimate Frisbee: Our Ultimate Frisbee team posing after a win!



*30 - Tang Soo Do: Warm-up before the Tang Soo Do class*



*31 - Choir: Our Choir performing in the Christmas formal dinner*



*32 - Pool: Action from the Ustinov Derby: Pool A vs Pool B*



33 - Women's Badminton: The girls after winning their league undefeated!

## GCR Events





*34 - Ustinov Summer Ball 2019*

**Ustinov GCR** hosts many exciting events throughout the year, in College, in Durham city, and even further afield.

The **Formal Dinners** provide an air of sophistication, while the **themed parties** let you dance the night away! Probably the biggest GCR event of the year is the **Ustinov Summer BBQ**, with as much free food and live entertainment as you could possibly hope for. We also have the annual **Ustinov Summer Ball** to round off the exam season.

We also hold many other events including family days, sports trips, and days out to local attractions. Keep your ears open and your eyes peeled so you don't miss out!

What if there's nothing on?





## Weekly events



35 - Peter Platypus at a Movie Night

**THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN!** Even if there doesn't appear to be a big party or formal, the GCR is still running smaller, regular events every week! Check the noticeboard at the entrance of the bar/cafe area to check our events in advance that we have planned for you.

### Film Nights!

The Sheraton Park Bar has a film every Tuesday night, run by the **GCR Video Master**. Join the “**Ustinov Film Night**” Facebook group to keep up to date on what is being shown and to make suggestions.

### Quiz Nights!

Every Thursday night, the bar hosts a weekly pub quiz. Team of up to 8, £1 buy-in and the winning team gets the **pot!** There are also **chocolates** for the second-last placed team and a half-time round to win a round of **drinks!**

For those not familiar with the British Pub Quiz, this is a traditional entertainment designed to be more fun than competitive... most importantly all **phones are banned** for looking up answers or asking online friends (taking quiz selfies is still acceptable).

## Ustinov Live!



*36 - Jake Brooker performing on a Ustinov Live Night*

A couple of times per term, the Ustinov Bar holds an open-mic/ talent night. If you play an **instrument**, have a **band** or want to read **poetry** (or even **stand-up**) then this is the event for you! We will be holding one of these soon if you want to perform, email [vp.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:vp.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk) to arrange a timeslot and discuss tech needs.

## Trips Out!



*37 - Peter Platypus visiting York.*

The **GCR International Students Officer** is responsible for organising regular trips out to local attractions. Previous locations have included Beamish Museum, Bamburgh Castle and York. The shared transport means these are cheap days out and the **GCR** has a **national trust membership** to save you even more money (free entry to NT properties)! Contact our International Student Officer ([iso.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:iso.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk)) if you want to visit a special place, we might be able to arrange something.

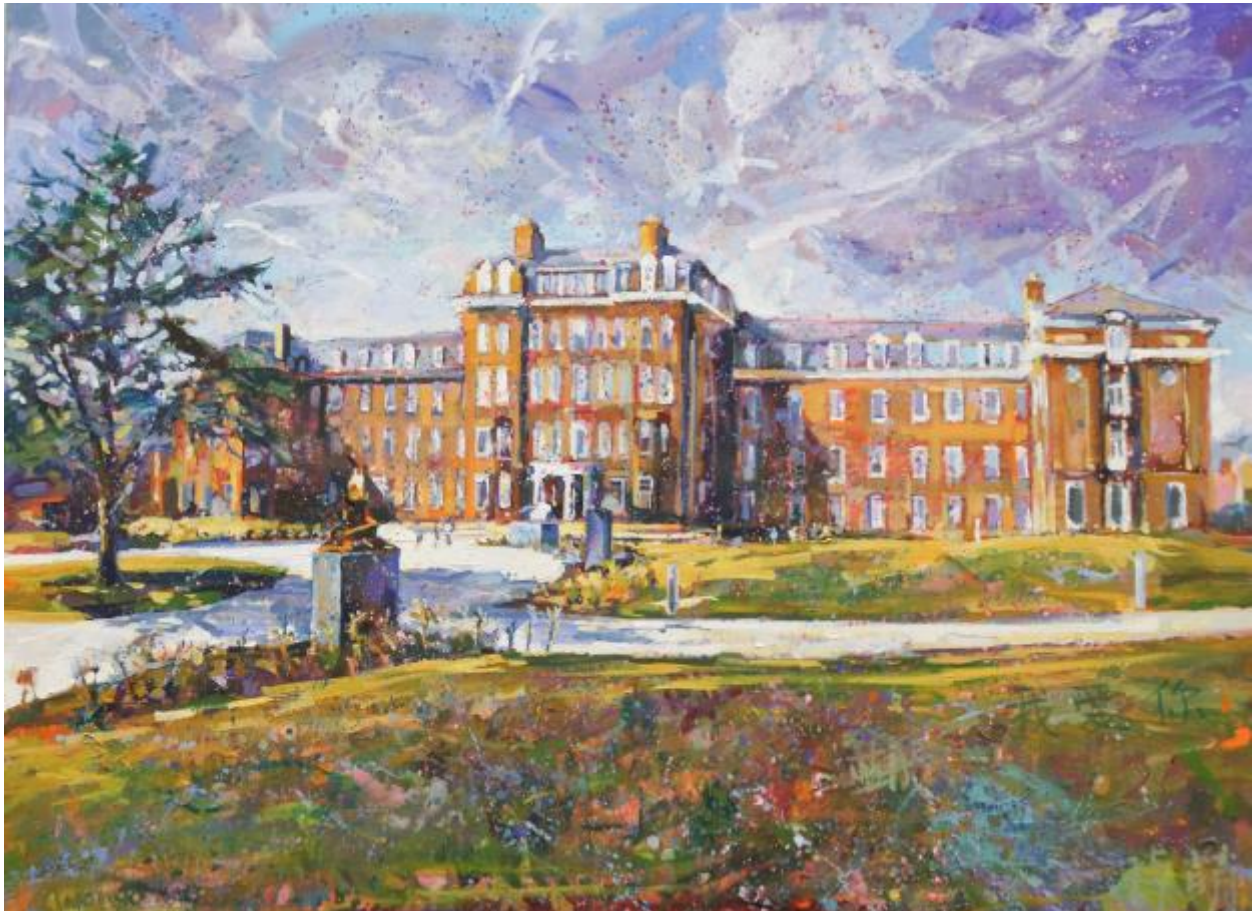
## General Meetings!



The **GCR** is run by students, for students and for important **changes and decisions**, we need to let YOU, our members know and let everyone have their say. **GMs** are where the **Executive** tell you what they've been doing (and can be grilled in person if you're unhappy).

They are also where new positions get **elected**, this can make a huge difference to your student life. Every GM is accompanied by desserts (on us!) and visits from external **food trucks!**

## Livers out





38 - Summer BBQ 2019

Are you a Ustinov College student but don't live here? Don't worry - your accommodation status makes you a 'Liver Out' and you bet that the **GCR** will make sure you are taken care of!

Just because you don't live in college doesn't mean you can't get involved in college life! All the college events are open to livers out and we hope you'll attend as many as you'd like. We also have a specific GCR officer - the **Liver's Out Rep** who is in charge of organising events designed for livers out and is also responsible for raising their exclusive concerns to the GCR. You can find out more about the Liver's Out Rep on our website <https://ustinovgcr.com/officer-roles/>.

Over the years, **Liver's Out Representatives** have organised cocktail evenings, brunches, theatre and cinema trips, and guided walks. They also sell tickets for formals and trips in town to make it easier for people who live far away from college to join in college events. Currently, the **GCR** is working on easy travel facilities to and from events for the Ustinovians who live out. The biggest **GCR** event of the year, the **Summer BBQ** is also our most inclusive event, combining **Livers In and Out, families, alumni and college staff**. Regardless of where you live, we urge you to not miss it! You can also get livers out card for free from college that you can use to access the Sheraton bar, computer room, and project room!

Specific to the upcoming Induction Week, we have a few **Livers Out events** scheduled to try and bring to you the best of Ustinov College and enjoy your time at Durham! Keep an eye on social media and emails nearer the time for exact details.

## Guide to your flat



*39 - Couple Studio Room at Sheraton Park*

Your flat will come with some items already provided:

In the **Kitchen**:

- Microwave
- Kettle
- Toaster
- Fridge & Freezer (shared between all flatmates)
- Kitchen cupboards (these are not allocated by room number so take one per room)

In the **Bedroom**:

- Wardrobe/closet

- Desk
- Bookshelf space
- Wall-lamp
- Pinboard
- Bedroom starter-pack (containing towel, bedsheets, duvet, pillow)

In the **Bathroom**:

- Toilet brush
- Toilet roll (just two so that you have a chance to get to the shop)

General items, shared between all flatmates:

- Iron
- Ironing board
- Vacuum cleaner

For basically everything else, there's Wilkinson's, a shop in which you can buy basically anything very cheaply.

## Guide to Kitchen Cleanliness



40 - Shared kitchen at Sheraton Park

Ustinov Housekeepers clean your kitchen once a week – but they are not there to tidy up a kitchen that is unreasonably messy, so don't let it get to that state.

- Make some 'house rules' when you move in with your flatmates and stick to them throughout the year.

- After cooking or preparing food, wipe down surfaces and clean up any mess, such as crumbs or any spills on the cooker.
- Do your washing up quickly: don't let it build up, and don't leave it in the sink.
- Clean out your fridge shelves regularly and don't leave spoiled food in the fridge.
- Don't take up too much space in the fridge or freezer—they are shared between all your flatmates, so stick to your shelf!
- Recycle! There are clearly labelled recycling bins for plastics, cardboard, tins, and glass, as well as a general rubbish bin.
- The rubbish and recycling bins will be emptied throughout the week—but if the bin is full, empty it and put in a new bin bag (which are provided).
- Chat to the cleaners—they are part of the Ustinov community, the same as you!

## Guide for Partners

Many of the students who come to live at Ustinov are accompanied by their partners, who live with them on-site at Sheraton Park, or at Keenan House: Ustinov's family accommodation.

If you are a partner of a student, it can be difficult to work out what GCR facilities you can use, what events you can attend, and even simply what help you're entitled to. If you're in any doubt, please ask a GCR Committee member—but you're a member of the Ustinov community, the same as your partner!

1. Partners are entitled to NHS access just the same as students. Make sure you register as soon as you get to Durham.
2. Apply for your National Insurance Number (NI) right away. You will probably need one if you're interested in getting a job or opening a bank account.
3. Take advantage of Induction Week. You'll be living with the same people as your partner, so Induction Week is the perfect time to make friends.
4. Don't feel like you don't have a voice in the college. If you have something that needs to be addressed speak up and get it solved—you live here too!
5. You won't be alone. As a postgraduate college, Ustinov has loads of students in committed relationships so that means there are other people like you living maybe in the building next door or upstairs.
6. If you're not sure whether you are welcome at an event or activity, ask someone from the GCR Committee. You almost certainly will be, and if you don't ask you'll never know!
7. Partners can get GCR associate membership!
8. Your partner may be working a lot on their coursework so don't be afraid to venture out on your own—hang out in the bar or café, join in on a litter-pick, or go on that trip with the GCR.



9. Join the Ustinov Facebook group and engage in the conversation. You'll feel more connected to the community where you'll be living.
10. Most of the University societies and student groups are open to non-students, so if you're interested in getting involved in something, go ahead and ask about it!
11. Be prepared to be a part of a diverse, fun, and caring community who is happy that you, as well as your partner, are here in Durham living in Ustinov!

## GCR Welfare



The **Ustinov College GCR Welfare Team** is here to provide support and signposting for all welfare-related issues including those surrounding mental health, sexual health, general health, and addiction. The GCR Welfare Support is a **confidential** service unless there is a safeguarding issue. For more information, you can contact the Welfare Officer at [welfare.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:welfare.ustinovgcr@durham.ac.uk).

### ***General Health***

When you arrive in Durham it is recommended that you register either with the **University Health Centre** or with one of the local practices. It's a quick and straightforward process and you can find out more about the procedure of registering with a doctor on the university's webpage.

### ***Mental Health***

The Welfare Team is here to listen to student's concerns and advise them on the professional options available to address the issues they are experiencing. We are also a ready ear for those students experiencing issues that they just want to get off their chest. All discussions are held in the strictest confidence. Durham University also operates **Nightline (0191 334 6444)**, an anonymous and confidential phone line run by student volunteers and open every night of term between 9:00 p.m. –7:00 a.m. The University also has an inhouse counselling service that offers up to **six free sessions** per academic year to all students.



### ***General Safety***

**Durham is generally a very safe city.** However, it is always important to be sensible when going out at night. Make sure that you know how to get back home safely, avoid walking alone at night if possible, and make sure you always have enough money with you to get a taxi or the night bus back home — Durham operates a **Get Home Safe Scheme** to make sure that students can get home in an emergency if they have no money (ask for more information). If you drink alcohol, make sure you always drink responsibly and remember to never leave your drink unattended, don't accept drinks from strangers, and don't drink if your drink has changed taste or consistency.

### ***Sexual Health***

Various forms of **contraception** are available for **free** in the college toilets and on request from members of the **GCR** during office hours. This includes a variety of different **condoms** and **lubricants**. You can also request a free **pregnancy** or seek information on STD testing. Please only take only what

you need. If you have any questions or concerns about **sexual harassment**, **sexual assault**, or issues surrounding **consent**, please do email or come and speak to a member of the Welfare Committee, who will be able to signpost you to the appropriate staff or organisations.

**Remember: Nobody should ever feel forced to do something they do not want to do. It is their body and it is their choice — no means no.**

Things might be useful to you



WHEN YOU ARRIVE



When you arrive at Ustinov, there will be no food in the kitchen refrigerator. If you need to **self-isolate** and want support with the **food package** please contact College by emailing [ustinov.membership@durham.ac.uk](mailto:ustinov.membership@durham.ac.uk). If not, try to plan ahead early in the day, and purchase a meal for

your first evening. At our Sheraton Park location, there is a Sainsbury grocery store half-a-mile away, which is open until 11 pm. From Keenan House and Brackenbury, there is a Co-Op Food in Framwellgate Moor, also about half-a-mile away and open to 11 pm. You can order takeaway, though without a UK cellphone you may have difficulty arranging delivery.

There are starter kits with towels, bedsheets, and a blanket when you move in, though they are an additional cost (refundable on return). You can also purchase your own bedding in town or in Newcastle (which is a fifteen-minute train journey). Businesses in Durham (and most of England) tend to shut down earlier than in some other countries. Don't assume major stores will be open after 6 pm. (Also, the UK tends to give times in 24-hour periods, rather than AM and PM).

## Medical



*41 - National Health Service*

The University Hospital of North Durham is located at North Rd, Durham DH1 5TW and can be reached, if travel by public transport, Bus 16A, 21, 50 and 816.

For an international student, you need to register with the GP before applying for the medical benefits. You can either register with the Claypath and University Medical Group or other local medical practices.

To register with Claypath and University Medical Group, you can do it prior to your arrival in Durham. It can be done online at [www.campusdoctor.co.uk/durham](http://www.campusdoctor.co.uk/durham). For other local medical practices, you are required to be in Durham and some of the practises did not accept the online form. The list of the medical practices in Durham can be found here <https://countydurhamccg.nhs.uk/about-us/primary-care-member-practices/>.

Please register as soon as possible as we never know when we really need it.

## Money



Bank accounts generally take 2-4 weeks to open, and you will need to have a UK phone number (O2, EE and Three have storefronts in the city centre that can help you get set up with a plan). You should plan your money management accordingly, and be sure to bring enough money to survive the first month. For both Sheraton Park and Keenan House, a nearby cash point is the Sainsbury grocery stores, and there are plenty of ATM's in the city centre.

The UK has been replacing its currency recently and taking old coins/bills out of circulation. The £5 and £10 notes now made of polymer instead of paper, and the £1 coins have a silver interior. The old notes and coins are no longer accepted (though banks will exchange them for valid currency). Also note, many stores will probably have some trouble providing change for £50 notes, and they are not often found in day-to-day usage.

If you plan to work in the UK you'll need a National Insurance Number (NINO), and that can tend to take a long time to acquire. Starting the process early is a good idea; the UK Gov website has full details for applying.

Finally, many stores in Durham offer student discounts with your campus card. Be sure to check or ask!

## Food



If you can, try and learn a few simple recipes for cooking using an oven and stove-top, as those are what you will find in your kitchen. Online delivery to college is available for supermarkets and for takeaway food. In addition to the nearby Sainsbury stores near Sheraton and Keenan House, the main supermarket in Durham City Centre is Tesco. There are also several smaller grocers on North Road, with more specific stock. As a rule of thumb, a week's worth of groceries is about ~£10-20.

UK tap water is safe to drink unless there is a signposted which specifically says otherwise. You will nevertheless often be asked if you wish to have Still or Sparkling water at most restaurants (with an associated price tag).

Halal or Kosher meat can be hard to find in Durham, you will likely need to travel to Newcastle, Gateshead, or Sunderland to find a good butcher. Vegetarian and Vegan options at cafes are available, but the variety might be limited. You are most likely to find either Falafel or Halloumi as a choice (the latter is a type of cheese made with goat's and sheep's milk which can be fried or grilled).

### Adjusting to Durham



*42 - View of the Castle and Cathedral in Town*

Make sure to bring something to decorate your room — books, photos, cards, posters — anything to make it feel more like home. You'll appreciate having something familiar to come back to while you're still settling in, and it's amazing what a difference these little things can make.

Northeast England does not get a lot of sun in the winter. There will be times in the first term when it will begin getting dark before 4 pm. Try and get out in the sunlight whenever you can, and try to find guides to surrounding walking paths. The area around Durham is truly beautiful, just as amazing as the heritage sights of the city. Be sure to explore the areas around Durham as well; a great deal of the northeast and Scotland is reachable by hopping on a train! The 16-25 Railcards are invaluable money-savers and are available to any student (even those older than 25). You simply need to fill out the Mature Student application form and have it stamped by the College or your department.



*43 - GCR Allotment*

Do not stop your daily activities because of the weather. Durham is a rainy city, so a good waterproof jacket and impermeable sneakers, shoes or boots are going to help you to continue with your plans. You might try carrying an umbrella with you, but you'll notice most of the locals just make do with a hood.

Get involved in the activities that the University and Ustinov College offer. Postgraduate life tends to be quite busy with assignments, but a good way to relax and to adapt to living here is through societies and sports. Try to make friends from different colleges, departments, and nationalities: you'll soon discover that almost everyone is in the same situation as yourself, studying in a strange new environment, pursuing postgraduate education, and far from friends and family back home. Take advantage of that shared experience; it is very easy in the first weeks to meet new people. You will likely soon find yourself using the following sentence very regularly "Hi, my name is [name], I'm studying [degree], and I'm from [place of origin]."

## Durham Nightline

# Durham Nightline



Durham Nightline is a fully student-run listening support service exclusively for Durham students—you can contact us about absolutely anything, and we'll listen and talk things through with you. We have a phone line (number on your campus card, DUO and keyring) as well as an instant messaging service available through our website.

We don't give advice—we're here to support you through your own decisions, at the end of the day you're in control; we can never know your full situation, or what the right thing for you might be.

We're a fully anonymous and confidential service—we can't trace your call or know anything beyond what you tell us, and that information never goes beyond the volunteer you speak to; we don't pass information along.

No volunteer will ever judge or assume your situation, regardless of what you want to talk about we're here. We're not linked with any religion/political group/other societies; you can talk to us about anything.

It could be you're in a really difficult situation and need support, or that you're walking home alone and would rather have someone to talk to.

We train new volunteers three times a year, so follow our social media or drop us a message for more information on volunteering with us. We hope your time at Durham is absolutely amazing, but there may be moments where it's a little less than that, so if you need someone to talk to, we're here.

You can contact Nightline at:

**Phone** — 0191 334 6444

**Email** — [nightline@durham.ac.uk](mailto:nightline@durham.ac.uk)

**Facebook** — @durhamnightline

**Instagram** — @durhamnightline

Need more information?



Our social media is a great place to post any queries you may have and find out what's going on at college!

If you have questions or concerns related to any of the following, please feel free to contact the appropriate committee member:



**Interests of the college, university, or other institutions outside the GCR:**

President – Diana Martinez-Trejo [ustinov.president@durham.ac.uk](mailto:ustinov.president@durham.ac.uk)

**GCR Elections:**

Chairperson – Connor Armstrong [chair.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:chair.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk)

**Ustinov clubs and societies & gym memberships:**

Clubs + Societies Officer – Christos Vlahos [cs.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:cs.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk)

**International student representation:**

International Students Officer – Muhammad Zulkifly [iso.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:iso.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk)

**Health or safety problems including, but not limited to, living conditions, illness, mental health problems or anxieties about personal safety:**

Welfare Officer – Jake Brooker [welfare.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:welfare.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk)

**Meeting Minutes:**

Secretary – Brad Din [secretary.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk](mailto:secretary.ustinogcr@durham.ac.uk)

**For questions or concerns relating to anything not previously listed:**

[ustinov.president@durham.ac.uk](mailto:ustinov.president@durham.ac.uk)