



Contents

1. Hello and Welcome!	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 2
2. Before You Leave	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 2-4
3. Getting to Warwick	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 4
4. Your First Week	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 5-6
5. Health & Security	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 6
6. Banking	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 6-7
7. Food	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 7-8
8. Accommodation	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 8-9
9. Getting Around	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 9-10
10. Religion	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 11
11. Entertainment	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 12
12. Work	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 12-13
13. Other Issues	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 13-14
14. The Malaysian Students' Association (MSA)	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pg. 15-16

1. Hello and Welcome!

Congratulations on your decision to study at The University of Warwick! We hope that this alternative handbook will help you during your initial adjustment period, with lots of helpful information!

This handbook is written for Malaysian students, by Malaysian students, and so it will informally address certain issues that we faced while we were settling in (sometimes, with much frustration and confusion).

*Please note that this is **NOT** meant to replace the University of Warwick Welcome Guide Handbook sent to you by the International Office. Visit the International Office website at <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/services/international> for more information.

2. Before You Leave

This may be a stressful time, but don't panic!

All you need to do is:

- Accept your offer! :)
- Return the **Orientation Form** if you have decided to attend the Orientation Program
- Fill in and send off the **Heathrow Coach Pick-up Form** (available if you attend the Orientation Program)
- Make sure you've got your **Visa** document ready. If you haven't, please note that visa applications are **NOT** processed at the British High Commission, they outsource it to a company called **VFS (M) Sdn. Bhd.** Their office is located at Suite 19-06, 19th Floor, Wisma MCA, 163 Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2164 9323 or 2168 8603. Details regarding your visa application can be found at <http://www.vfs-uk-my.com/>

There are 4 very important documents that you **must** carry in your **hand luggage**.

- **University Acceptance Letter** – This will come to you in the mail.
- **Chest X-Ray and Report** (*in English!*) – If you don't have one, please get it done.
- **Bank Draft / Letter** – To Cover Tuition & Accommodation.
- **Document stating your Visa to UK.**

Upon arrival, you will need to show these documents to the immigration officer at the airport.

Your Welcome Pack from the university includes information about the **Orientation Programme** and a thorough checklist of the documents you need to have with you – use it!

Things you might want to bring along with you:

- Two weeks' worth of essential **toiletries**.
- **Moisturiser** and **lip balm**.
- **Photocopies of important documents** such as your passport, IC, and school certificates.
- **Passport Photos** – These are unbelievably expensive, and you will need them for your student cards, department records, railcards etc. We recommend you bring at least 10.
- Spare **spectacles** / contact lens & solution and small screwdrivers.
- **Ethernet LAN cables**, extension cords, power strips or adapters for electrical appliances.

- Your **drivers' license** (printed version – not the IC-integrated type), just in case you decide to drive around during the holidays. It is also a useful identification document.
- **Clothes** – Bring a 2 week supply of DIFFERENT underwear, clothes, socks, etc. to survive the first few weeks. Students usually tend to do laundry once a week. Also, you will find it useful to wear dark and white clothes in separate weeks as this will be less tedious when it comes to doing laundry.
- **Textbooks** are cheaper in Malaysia (try University Bookstore, Sct. 14), so we suggest save enough of your weight allowance for some of them. Similarly, you might be able to buy some textbooks from the 2nd or 3rd year students who won't need them anymore. (Hopefully, you'll get a special Malaysian discount.)
- **Pens** – pens such as Pilot G2 can be quite pricy there (about GBP 3.00). So it might be a good idea to bring one or two to save some pennies. Many of us actually bring one or two months' worth of stationery!
- **Hair dryers** in Malaysia are of much better quality and are not heavy to carry.
- **Photos** of home are invaluable to help overcome homesickness (which normally sets in some time during the Easter Holidays). They are also good during conversations with friends and for decorating your room.
- Many Malaysians play badminton regularly, so don't forget to bring a badminton **racquet** if you like playing badminton (or whatever sport) as well as sportswear of course. Feather shuttlecocks cannot be found in the UK.
- If you like, a **rice cooker**. It used to be a favourite must-bring item but rice cookers are available in the UK for £20. So, you might want to save up the space for something more "important".
- Also, **traditional costumes** are worn during many of our MSA events, so do bring your baju melayu / cheongsam / sari and have some fun!
- **Small locks** or **pad locks**.
- **Malaysian food and spices**; such as tom-yam paste, curry powder, ikan bilis, Chinese herbal sachets, Maggi Mee, milo etc. However, please ensure that these items are properly sealed in your check-in luggage bag to prevent confiscation just in case your bag is being inspected. (We do not know how strict they are when it comes to food)

(most of the suggested things are either unavailable or significantly more expensive in the UK)

Do Not Bring

- **Lots of warm clothing**. Initially, 1 or 2 jackets will be enough. It is best to come and experience the weather before choosing what warm clothing may suit you. It is also better to purchase your warm clothing in the UK because there is a larger variety of winter wear that are both practical and reasonably priced.
- **Duvets** and **Comforters** are ridiculously bulky to carry, plus most residences provide them. If you need one, you can buy a good one for less than £20 (duvet & Cover) in Tesco nearby or Coventry.
- **Pots, pans, plates & cutleries** are inexpensive, easily available at Tesco, Costcutter or Wilkinson's, and heavy to carry.
- **Files, Paper & Calculators** - Writing pads and files are also reasonably priced in Warwick. Printing paper is slightly more expensive but very unpractical to bring from home. Only certain calculators are allowed to be used during exams such as the Casio Fx-83/Fx-85. However, if you insist on using the ones from here (your lucky calculator perhaps), you may do so, but it requires approval from your respective faculty.
- **Kettles, Blenders, or Irons** – They are heavy to carry, and readily available in UK. (a good place to look for these items is Argos) At about 5-10 pounds each, it is better to save your weight allowance for other "more important" items.

- **Printers.** Please do not bring a printer because it is too heavy to carry. You can get a decent HP Deskjet for about 40 pounds. However, printer refills are worth bringing if you already know which model you want to buy.
- **Desktop Computers.** These are too heavy to carry and are getting cheaper in the UK and not very practical. We recommend purchasing a decent laptop. If you plan to buy one in the UK, prices range between GBP350 to GBP800 depending on the specifications. If you currently have a powerful laptop, or plan to buy one, please make sure you buy one **with a network (Ethernet/LAN) card**, or get one installed. [See section on 'Computers' under 'Miscellaneous'.]

*Please be aware of the **UK Duty-Free Allowance** (usually 200 cigarettes, 1 litre spirits for flights originating outside the EU) before loading up on duty-free items. Customs checks are becoming increasingly frequent, and they can seize the goods, fine you or even prosecute you (depending on the offence). Please refer to the '**Illegal Activities**' section under 'Miscellaneous'.

3. Getting to Warwick

At the Airport

As mentioned earlier, KLIA and Heathrow may give problems which, of course, are the last things you want to face when flying over to a new country. For e.g. luggage stolen, luggage wrongly directed to Kathmandu, 'Fragile' luggage completely smashed up, etc. **We strongly recommend that you insure your luggage if you have valuable or important items checked-in.** Also, *please please please* be aware of your belongings at all times as thefts do occur in train stations and airport lounges.

Should your luggage get damaged or lost during airplane transit, please make a report **BEFORE** leaving the customs area in the airport. All reports made after you have left the customs area are usually not entertained.

Most flights from Malaysia enter the UK either through London Heathrow (LHR) or Birmingham International Airport (BHX). Birmingham International Airport is located about 20 – 30 minutes from campus by car. The most popular airline companies used by Malaysian students are

- MAS – Malaysia Airlines System (direct flight from KLIA)
- EK – Emirates Airlines (KUL – Dubai - Heathrow) or (KUL – Dubai - Birmingham).

Nowadays an increasing number of Malaysian students opt for AirAsiaX, as it is cheaper most of the time. But do watch out for special promotions from MAS and EK, which are common during peak periods for students.

Arrival!

Most students arrive in London Heathrow Airport. If you are coming for the orientation programme / arriving on orientation day, the University's complimentary **Heathrow Coach Pick-up Service** will bring you straight from London Heathrow to the University.

If you are arriving on a different day, you can take a coach from London Heathrow to Coventry Pool Meadow bus station. You can check the bus timetable and rates as well as book your tickets online at www.nationalexpress.com. Alternatively, you could also travel by train which you can check the train schedule and fares at www.nationalrail.co.uk.

You can then take a cab to the University from the train or bus station in Coventry, which usually costs about £10.

From Birmingham airport, you can take a cab straight to the University. It should cost around £28. Otherwise, you could take a train from the airport to Coventry (£4) and then a cab or bus to the University.

****IMPORTANT:** Please note that the University of Warwick is in the city of **COVENTRY**, and not Warwick town. People are known to have ended up in Warwickshire instead of the University of Warwick before!!

4. *Your First Week*

FIRST WEEK! This is when you have to get all your stuff sorted out! The important things are checking into your accommodation, completing your University registration and obtaining your Student Status Certificate, opening your bank account & mobile phone line, and confirming your optional modules.

Information on opening a bank account and mobile phone line will be touched on a bit later.

Checking in to Accommodation

You may get your keys once you arrive on campus at the Rootes Social Building. You only need to present the university staff your firm offer letter.

Tuition & Accommodation Fees

There will be counters set up in the Panorama Room in the Rootes Social Building for registration, collection of student ID and settling of tuition and accommodation fees. Do not worry because there will be adequate university staff to direct you where to go. However, the Panorama Room counters are usually temporary, if you miss this opportunity, head on over to Student Services at the University House.

Registering for Sports & Societies

You will see notices around the University telling you about registration dates, which are arranged in order of surnames. Joining the **National Union of Students (NUS)** allows you to join the **University of Warwick Students' Union (UWSU)**, which then enables you to join the Union societies (such as the MSA), as well as enjoy Union-sponsored events at a discount. Joining the **Sports Federation (SF)** will allow you to join the sports societies.

Optional Modules

Your department will give you instructions of the procedure to confirm your option modules. Normally, if the option module is not hosted by your department, you will have to register in the office of the department that hosts the module.

Settling In

You will want to unpack and decorate your new room during your first week. As you are one of the first to arrive, make sure you book yourself a drawer, cupboard, shelf, fridge and freezer space in the kitchen **as soon as possible**. You might also want to get essential items such as plates, food and stationeries from the local supermarkets as quickly as possible just in case they run out when the local students move in.

Culture Shock!

Be prepared to feel impressed yet frustrated while discovering the culture that gives the UK its character. Generous doses of polite phrases such as 'please' or 'thank you'; arriving 15 minutes late is **not the norm at all**. Locals tend to ask "How are you?" or "You alright?" (which means the same thing) a lot, and unless you are very good friends with the person, the right answer is usually a quick, non-committal "Good, how are you?" in return. You will also find that the locals will have problems understanding your spoken English, as we tend to speak quite fast and mix our English with Manglish.

Another culture shock! You will realise how important it is to the local people in UK to consume **alcohol** in order to have a good time. Drinking is very much the social focal point, much like our mamak culture – to them, no night out is complete or even existent without alcohol. This is one of the main reasons why most Malaysians do not hang out with locals. We hope that (where permitted), you do learn more about UK culture through interaction with the locals, and yet **drink responsibly** (where allowed), and not fall behind

on your work or lose self-control after having a pint or twenty. Many students have been thrown out of Halls of Residences after being destructive or violent while drunk.

Weather

If you are the type to complain about weather in Malaysia, you are in for a big surprise! Even though the weather in Malaysia is often extreme, i.e. it can rain like cats and dogs overnight, it is rather stable. On the other hand, the weather in the UK is **very extreme** and **very unpredictable** – it can be a scorching afternoon and yet rain suddenly, bringing the temperature down by 8 degrees. However, your worst enemy is the wind. The wind is what makes the weather so very cold; the wind chill factor can bring temperatures down by 10 degrees. You should always dress warm when going out as Warwick can become VERY windy and cold at night. The rain is not like local thunderstorms – it is usually a very long and heavy drizzle.

Lectures & Classes

The earliest lectures are at 9am and the latest ones at 6pm for undergraduates. Seminars and tutorials will not usually start until the 2nd or 3rd week, but it is important that you **attend all your lectures, tutorials and seminars**. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and warnings from your Subject and Personal Tutors. Please bear this in mind when the temptation arises to skip classes. After much calculation, we have discovered that each seminar/lecture costs about £30 (and rising).

5. Health & Security

The **National Health Service (NHS)** provides free medical treatment for international students studying in the UK for more than 6 months. However, before you can make use of NHS health services, you will need to **register at the University Health Centre**.

While consultation and certain vaccinations are free, prescribed medication must be paid for. Alternative brands for that family of medicine may be cheaper, but please ask the pharmacist before buying. The closest pharmacy is on campus.

If you have missed any vaccinations, you can still get them after you have arrived in Warwick. The NHS also pays for your X-ray at the airport if your Malaysian copy is deemed insufficient. The NHS is infamous for its bad service, long waiting lists, and incompetence in certain areas, but we are fortunate that the average waiting time at the health centre in our university is only about **1 day**. Remember that you will need to make an appointment with the doctor before you can see him/her.

NHS Dental treatment is only free if you are below 18 years of age.

Security On Campus

If you are living on campus, you will be happy to know that it is generally a safe place, even after dark. The security officers on campus are extremely professional and patrol the university often. However, as always, do practice common sense when in dark or in secluded areas. Petty theft and break-ins are quite rampant so be careful of your valuables. Insuring your valuables would be a good idea.

6. Banking

Currently branches of 2 major UK banks operate on campus, ie Barclays and Natwest. There are more banks in/near the city centre, ie HSBC, Lloyds TSB and Abbey (Santander). All of these banks provide student banking facilities. A student bank account entitles you to a very liquid account to pay your school fees or bills by Direct Debit. Savings accounts cannot be used to pay bills or issue cheques, although Instant Access Savings Accounts provide ATM withdrawal facilities and bank transfers.

Below lists the documents needed to open an international student account:

- Your identity (Passport)
- Proof of student status (Offer letter and Certificate of Student Status)
- Proof of your UK address (Certificate of Student Status)

- Proof of overseas address (Offer letter, including your home address)

Summary of facilities provided by banks on campus (**Natwest** and **Barclays**):

- Current Account
- VISA debit card
- Internet and phone banking

Please note that, due to the small capacity in the banks, and large student intake, it would take a while for one to open an account. We strongly suggest you to make an appointment with the bank personnel, as soon as possible. (Some only manage to open an account 3 weeks after arriving in Warwick.) Do also check their websites before registering for an account – it'd be good to know the latest updates on their account policies.

Other Banks

Other British banks such as Lloyds TSB may offer gifts and have good service, but it is much more convenient to have an account with a bank branch and ATM on campus, plus the added value of their experience in dealing with international students.

Some international students have more than 1 bank account to take advantage of such gifts even though this practice is not allowed by the banks. We do not encourage you to do so as 1 bank account is usually sufficient in providing the basic services we need as students.

Of Cash & Cheques and other things...

It takes about 4 working days to clear a UK cheque (from another bank), and it takes 5 working days to clear a foreign Bank Draft. We strongly recommend that you open your bank account immediately after obtaining the required documents from the university during the Arrivals Weekend, put your Bank Draft in and use your cash / travellers cheques while waiting for it to clear.

***Please note :*

- Foreign Bank Drafts / cheques / Telegraphic Transfers will not reach you in its entirety as the bank takes a not-so-small percentage of it.
- TTs from a Malaysian HSBC account to a UK HSBC account takes much less time, than TTs to and from other banks, but the fee does not differ. Internet banking can be very convenient, and probably the best method for a TT.
- To open a bank account, apart from identification (passport), you also need a **Certificate of Student Status from the university** which bears your Warwick residence address. Please collect your student status letter before visiting the bank as the queue could be quite long and you do not want to waste your effort.

7. Food

Being Malaysians, food is always a big worry, and in some cases, a big struggle!

Many students tend to opt for cooking dinner in groups after the first few weeks – this reduces the total grocery bill, saves time, adds diversity into your food, and is a lot more fun than eating or cooking alone!

Supermarkets

Tesco is the UK's largest supermarket chain and has a store a mere 5 to 15-minute-walk away depending on which accommodation you stay in. It is open 24 hours on weekdays, has a massive selection, and is very reasonable. The 'Tesco Value' range of food is extremely cheap as well. However, be aware that certain products may be of questionable quality.

The **Costcutter** Supermarket on campus is slightly more expensive but is more convenient. It also has excellent regular deals, which can be found on the flyers in the Halls or in Costcutters itself. Recently, they have included halal snacks such as kebabs, into their line of products.

Coventry Market

The circular **Coventry Retail Market** is the UK version of our local market. Vegetables, fruits, meat and especially fish are sold at lower prices compared to the supermarkets. You can also find useful items, such as stationery, pots & pans, clothes, shoes, underwear and electrical items there.

Asian Groceries

Fresh Asia is a small Korean-owned shop that opened sometime at the end of 2006 which specializes in Asian groceries. It is located in the Cannon Park shopping centre (same building as Tesco) and has quite a good selection of food. Eg. Maggi mee, tin curries, satay sauce, fishballs, cincau etc.

A few recently-opened Asian grocery shops can also be found in the Coventry city centre.

Birmingham's China Town is a 20 minute train ride away from Coventry, and it perhaps provides the best selection you can get away from London's China Town. Sometimes, they even offer Durians (for those with durian cravings). You can enjoy Dim Sum, Roasted Duck and lots of Asian pastries and groceries (at a price, of course).

Halal meat

Halal meat is readily available in Coventry as there is a large Muslim community there. There is a famous street called **Stoney Stanton Road**, in which all butcher shops sell Halal meat. Another place is **Foleshill**. More recently, a Nando's branch opened in Coventry, which also serves halal chicken. Halal food is also sometimes sold during lunchtime at the prayer room.

Eating Out

Eating out in UK is pretty expensive. A simple meal from the supermarket (say, a sandwich, crisps and a drink) could cost you £4. A meal at Xanana's, which serves excellent banoffee waffles, would be about £5-6. A meal in the Union such as a kebab and a drink would cost you slightly more, about £5. A meal in a pub / restaurant in town will cost you about £10 while a proper Chinese restaurant meal in China Town will cost you about £10-£15.

Halal food on and off campus is pretty easy to find. Costcutters have a whole section of Halal sandwiches, chicken pakoras and other wraps. The union eatery, Xanana's serve Halal food *ask the waiters and waitresses on duty*. The Warwick Islamic Society, iSoc, compiles a list and reviews it every year to confirm the halal food joints on campus as well as the "halal-ity" of the food stuff themselves.

Other options if you do not feel like cooking are the home delivery services such as Roma Pizza, Go-Go Chicken and many more! They normally distribute their menus and pamphlets under your door, so don't be surprised with the options and the prices that are available! To our Muslim brothers and sisters, most of the operating home delivery services are halal, so no need to worry!

8. Accommodation

It is safe to say that Warwick has among the best accommodation standards for student accommodation in the UK. Apart from a very small number of rooms, all are single study bedrooms, thus ensuring privacy and a conducive environment for work. In fact, Lakeside, Heronbank & Arthur Vick rooms are comparable to 3-star hotel rooms in KL.

All rooms on campus are networked with LAN ports that allows you to connect to the internet (there is no Wifi access within halls of residences). All rooms also include beds with beddings (blanket / duvet, sheets, pillow,) bookshelves, good desks, cupboards and sometimes a sink. The kitchens are well equipped with stoves, a microwave, oven & grill, toaster, fridges, and freezer. The kitchens are normally cleaned on every alternative day.

Lakeside, Heronbank, Arthur Vick (AV) and Jack Martin (JM) halls have the most expensive rooms. They are all single rooms with en-suite bathrooms, complete with bathtub and shower. The rooms are generally more spacious and are cleaned every day.

Arthur Vick residents get lounges and newer kitchens, as well as a laundry room for every block. Lakeside kitchens double up as lounges, and have their own laundry rooms. JM kitchens also double up as lounges, but residents have to use the central laundry room.

Please be aware that you have to clear your room for the vacation weeks which are not covered by your let period (30 weeks), and therefore not covered by rent.

These are standardised periods:

- Postgraduates in **Tocil, Lakeside, Heronbank & Claycroft** have 50 week lets. (The whole year.)
- Undergraduates in **Tocil, Rootes, Whitefields, Heronbank & Lakeside** have 39 week lets (including term-time, plus the Christmas and Easter holiday periods, but not the summer holiday period.)
- Undergraduates in other halls have 30 week lets, which cover term-time only. If this is you, you are required to clear out your room and move out during holiday periods. Alternative accommodation is available for rent during this time, normally in **Cryfield Halls**.

Rootes, Whitefields and Benefactors are just next to the Union, and thus a little noisier than the other halls when there are events at the Union. However, most students who stay here enjoy their stay for the friends they meet and the convenience of location.

The **Westwood** Halls are residence houses in Westwood campus, which is a tranquil little campus on its own. Although a slight distance from the main campus, Westwood boasts huge study bedrooms.

Lakeside and **Claycroft** are located further away from campus to preserve the tranquillity of the halls (supposedly for serious studying) and exclusivity of the area. Claycroft, is mainly populated by 3rd years or postgraduates. (Lakeside overlooks a lake while Claycroft has its own football field, and is only 5 minutes away from Tesco!)

Bluebell is the newly built accommodation hall. Situated behind Rootes, its central location, en-suite rooms and 39-week let explain the high price! Guaranteed to be a luxurious room.

If you have not filled in an accommodation form, it is very important that you do so. Contact the Accommodation Office at accommodation@warwick.ac.uk to obtain an Accommodation form, if you do not already have one.

Visit <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/accommodation> for more information.

9. Getting around

Travelling by train / coach

If you plan to travel around the UK a lot by train or coach, it is best that you get a Railcard or Coachcard. These cards will give you a discount of about 1/3 on your fare. It is also cheaper to buy your tickets **online and in advance**, e.g. a return ticket to London by Virgin Trains would cost £20 if booked at least 1 week in advance. Trains generally take 1 hour and busses take about 2 and a half hours. For national travel, www.thetrainline.com, www.nationalrail.co.uk, www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com and www.nationalexpress.com are the respective websites for online bookings and timetables.

Travelling by bus

Buses are the most common mode of transport for students. You can get to almost anywhere in Coventry by bus. Travel West Midlands (TWM) and Stagecoach are the main bus companies in Coventry. You can either buy bus tickets for daily travel, or annual bus passes (the bus passes are more for those living off campus or those who travel a lot by bus). You should check the front of the bus for its destination before boarding, or you could kindly ask the bus driver for help. Buses usually arrive every 10 to 20 minutes.

TWM Buses

TWM owns buses 12/12A/112. Students usually use the No.12 buses. These white and blue buses run from Coventry to the University, Kenilworth (a small retirement town) and finally Leamington Spa. The trip to the city centre takes about 20 minutes.

The fare to Coventry city centre is £1.60. Alternatively, a £3.20 Day Pass gives you unlimited travel on all TWM buses for that day. If 5 people are travelling together, you pay £7.50 for a 5-Person Day Saver, which allows the group unlimited travel on TWM buses for that day. **Change is not provided on TWM buses.**

Stagecoach Buses

Stagecoach buses go to Leamington Spa only. Stagecoach operates the UniBus U1 (it's a pink bus) and it travels from the university to Leamington Spa. The trip to Leamington takes between 20-40 minutes. There are no group offers for Stagecoach buses, but change is given.

Megabus

Megabus (www.megabus.com)- a budget coach company offers amazing deals when booked in advance and fares to London start from £1. Also, instead of travelling to Coventry to board National Express coaches, Megabus picks commuters from Tesco and is extremely convenient.

Cabs

Travelling by cab in the UK is very different to Malaysia in many different ways. For one thing, cab drivers in the UK know every single back road in their area, and will take you to your destination through the shortest route & in the quickest time possible. Most cab drivers also drive carefully. You can also call a cab for immediate travel, or make cab bookings for travel at odd times, such as to the coach station at 4am to catch a flight with no extra charges. However, travelling by cab is not cheap, and most students only use them when absolutely needed, or in the wee hours of the morning.

Driving in the UK

If you have only driven in Malaysia so far, driving in the UK may also be a culture shock! People give you the right of way, and vice versa. You don't "cut into people's lane"! The speed traps come with clear-cut warnings, and it is fine to speed on the motorway!

Due to the fact that most international students don't have cars, more and more students are beginning to rent cars during holidays for road trips / domestic travel, and for convenience sake. Most Malaysian students rent cars from Kenilworth Vehicle Rental (KVR) for long distance travel, or easycar.com in Birmingham for domestic travel / convenience. You need to possess a full license (P licenses are insufficient) and be at least 21 years old to rent a car.

By right, your Malaysian drivers' license is valid in the UK for a year after entry. However, if at the time you intend to drive, your passport was stamped less than a year before, you can drive legally. Alternatively, if you intend to take a British license, you may do so, but of course it isn't cheap.

Travelling to Other Parts Of Europe

While studying in the UK, many Malaysian students take the opportunity to travel to nearby countries during the Christmas and Easter holidays. Among their favourite locations include Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, and France.

There are several modes of travel possible, such as taking a coach (for e.g. from London to Paris), by Eurostar (the European underwater version of the bullet train), and by flight. Instead of paying a significantly large amount, most students fly Ryan Air or easyjet.com. The tickets are very inexpensive - For example, an air ticket from London Gatwick to Madrid will cost you only £22 each way. Again, tickets booked in advance will cost considerably less.

10. Religion

The University has a wide range of societies and facilities catering to students who practice many different beliefs.

Islam

The Midlands are home to a large number of Muslims, and there are a large number of mosques and halal meat suppliers in the area. The new **Prayer Hall** is beside the Chaplaincy and the Warwick Arts Centre. There are group prayers conducted for all 5 daily prayers and Friday Prayers. Most of iSoc's events are conducted in the Prayer Hall unless stated otherwise.

Although there are no halal food establishments in the Union, halal snacks can be obtained from Costcutter. Vegetarian options are also available from certain outlets all over campus. All food served at MSA events are Halal.

The **Islamic Society** (iSoc) is an active society made up of Muslim students in Warwick. Apart from organising talks and seminars presented by visiting speakers, the iSoc has also organised fund-raising dinners and social events. There is a very large and active Muslim community in Warwick, even though not all are members of iSoc.

The iSoc also organises **tarawikh** prayers and **iftars** or *buka puasa* during the Ramadhan period. These are funded by donations from members and people who attend Friday prayers, as some who work near the university also join the *jumaah*.

Catholic

For Catholics, there is a Catholic parish priest at the University that conducts daily mass at 12.30pm in the Chapel, and Sunday mass at 12:30pm every Sunday at the chaplaincy. A priest is there to administer any sacraments needed.

Christian

The University also provides a **Chaplaincy next to the Arts Centre**, which is staffed by 3 pastors. They conduct free church services every Sunday at 11.15am.

The University of Warwick **Christian Union** (CU) is a very active society, and they meet every Wednesday at 5.45pm for worship and a message. They also have weekly meetings in smaller groups according to residence, for fellowship and prayer, and sometimes have social events.

There are numerous churches in Coventry, such as New Horizons Church (NHC), Elim Church, and Queen's Road Baptist Church. There are MSA members who attend these churches, and will be happy to bring you to join them on Sundays...

Buddhist

The Buddhist Society organises weekly meditation sessions on Thursday at 6.30pm in the Ramphal building. They also organise trips to the Forest Hermitage temple during Chinese New Year and Wesak day.

Hindu

There is also a Hindu Society in the University of Warwick. The HinduSoc has held many events such as Holi and Diwali Ball as well as events like Henna Evening.

Other beliefs

If you practice other religions, and require assistance, please approach any of the MSA committee members who will refer you to someone who may be able to help.

11. Entertainment

As students, there's hardly anything as important as entertainment, especially with the high work load the University slumps on us! Thankfully, there is wide range of entertainment for students in the area.

On Campus

The famous University of Warwick's Students' Union is said to be the largest in Europe and one of the best in the country, with its supply of very affordable alcohol, themed parties, fabulous local and international DJs, and all at a decent price. In fact, every night is a themed night at the Union, with music ranging from cheesy 90's pop (Top Banana) to hip-hop, garage and other music such as RnB (Soul Nation). Notable appearances in our Union include Judge Jules, Paul Oakenfold and Big Brovas.

For cultural and performing arts, be it music, theatre, or dance, the **Warwick Arts Centre** has a little something for everyone. Selected shows include performances by The London Philharmonic Orchestra. The Warwick Arts Centre also has an integrated cinema, which shows movies at a very low price.

Off Campus

The **Hippodrome** in Birmingham houses famous musicals, such as Les Misérables and Stomp. **The Royal Shakespeare Company** in Stratford-Upon-Avon is also a short drive away for all you Shakespeare fans.

However, most students usually choose the less cultured path and head for **SkyDome** in Coventry. The SkyDome is a popular place, housing the **Odeon** Cineplex, **Ignite Lava**, an ice-skating rink, plus many restaurant outlets. Movie tickets in the UK are, of course, rather expensive, as are clubs and restaurants. Another popular club for students in Coventry is The **Kasbah**.

There are also many good restaurants in Coventry, such as Pizza Express, Browns and Nando's. **Please be careful when going into Coventry after dark** – most shops are closed by then and so you will be one of the few people walking around. You will soon see why when this city is mentioned, the first word that comes to mind is 'dodgy'.

Royal Leamington Spa is perhaps Coventry's exact opposite. It boasts lots of lush greenery and old folks instead of Coventry's dull concrete and tattooed punks. Good shops and good restaurants unfortunately closes at 5.30pm (the usual closing time for UK shops). Leamington has (obviously) a spa, as well as a very beautiful river and parks. Despite this somewhat sterile atmosphere, the image of Leamington changes at night once the children of these respectable, upper-class retirees come out and play. You'll hear of utterances of Leamington's "dodgy end", which lies "after the railway bridge". Popular joints include **Smack** and **Evolve** as well as **Kelsey's**, a student-frequented bar. However, the cab ride back to University will set you back about £20, as opposed to Coventry's £15 or so.

Birmingham is the closest 'big city' to University, where you can feel like you are in London. It has a much wider range of shops, restaurants and clubs. The Bullring is a huge and upmarket mall – a popular shopping destination. It houses more reputable stores e.g. **Selfridges**. A wide range of Asian grocery shops and restaurants are also available.

12. Work

Many students like the idea of working part-time at the University. Not only is it a good way to supplement your pocket money, but also provides good training and adds to your university experience in more ways than one.

The University has an e-mail service called **Unitemp**, which operates by feeding information about temporary job opportunities.

Many students have done jobs outside the university, such as being cashiers in Tesco or other supermarkets and as cleaners at the Westwood Business Park (10 minutes from campus). However, most students favour University-based jobs.

University-based Work

As University-based jobs are on a contract basis, it is important to make sure you have enough time and energy to perform your duties. More importantly, it is important to be sure that you can work and study before signing up.

Many Malaysian students have worked as **stewards** for the Warwick Arts Centre, and generally enjoy their work. Stewards do a variety of different tasks, and earn between £4.00 and £5.00 per hour. Depending on the task for that shift, stewards sometimes have the privilege of watching performances for free. The hours are flexible, but some of the tasks, such as operating the cloakroom or ice-cream cart, pay more.

The University of Warwick **Hospitality Services**, which operates accommodation and the F&B outlets on campus hires students to assist in restaurant work. This pays about £6.00 an hour, but you will be on your feet all day serving customers. However, working the last shift allows you to take all the leftover food home!

More challenging jobs on campus include being **stewards** or **bartenders** for the Students' Union. These jobs pay almost £6.00 an hour and often require you to deal with violent drunks and clean up the terrible mess in the Union once everyone has gone home.

Cleaners on campus are paid about £6.00 an hour but have to report for duty at 7am to clean the rooms and laboratories.

Summer Internships

If you intend to try for summer internships in the UK, we would recommend you to send in your applications as early as possible, preferably in the region of December or January. This can significantly increase your chances of being selected as an intern, as the competition for internship spots is extremely high.

You can get much useful information on internships with UK firms & companies by attending career fairs. They are highly beneficial and can be very interesting. *(If nothing else, they give away loads of free stuff!)*

For those of you who wish to find work experience in Malaysia, the MSA has contacts with certain Malaysian firms for internships in Malaysia during the summer.

13. Other Issues

Mobile Phones

When you sign a year-long mobile contract, you can get a free handset or an expensive handset at a very low price. These offers can also be found on the internet

Do spend time, to look for the best offers as the promotions may vary with individual companies or even branches. Some popular networks are O2, Vodafone, Orange and T-Mobile. If you are already bringing over a phone from Malaysia, you can always get a SIM-only contract.

Whilst looking for the phone plan of your choice, you may get a Pay As You Go (prepaid) which works just like the prepaid system in Malaysia.

Note: In the UK, handphones are known as **mobile phones**, so when referring to them, please remember to say 'mobile phone' or 'mobile' instead of 'handphone' to avoid blank stares.

Computers

If you are bringing a **laptop**, it is best to get one where after-sales service is available in the UK, i.e. an international brand, for e.g. Dell, Compaq, etc. As you will probably use the LAN connection in your room, make sure you buy one with a network card.

Calling Home

Malaysians use the **Swiftcall** Card to call home. The rate to call home to Malaysia on Swiftcall is about 6.3p a minute for a £25 value card. You can obtain a £25 value card for £20 at Costcutter.

You can buy other cards in town for £18-20 (for £20 value), or from London's China Town for less than £15. Also, *letscallhome.com* sells these cards for a reasonable price. Another alternative would be to set up Skype accounts and call home for free!

Student Cards

- **University Card** – (also known as *Library Card* and *NUS Card*) You will receive this in your first week at University. This is a VERY important card. Apart from being an identity card and discount card, this card allows you access to the Library and other facilities such as the Sports Centre and Computer Lab. Needless to say, life at Warwick will be very difficult without this card. In addition, this card will entitle you to student discounts at places such as Topshop and HMV. It will also allow you to apply for Railcards and Coachcards. The Library Card should be ready for collection within week 1 of your first term. An option of providing your digital passport photo for the card via the internet is also available.
- **Railcard** and **Coachcard** - These entitle you to at least 1/3 off the normal ticket price, sometimes more! Both cards are a MUST for any student wanting to travel around UK by train or coach. The railcard costs £26/year while the coachcard costs £10/year. You can apply for a railcard at any railway station and you can get a coachcard at the Coventry Pool Meadow bus station.
- **International Student Identity Card (ISIC)** – This card is not very well-recognized in the UK, but if you intend to tour Europe, Ireland or the USA during your vacations, it is a good idea to bring this cards as it are more recognized in these locations.
- **Youth Hostel Association Card (YHA)** – Fewer students are familiar with this card, but if you are intending to travel a lot on budget, this is a good card to have on you. It allows you the use of clean, safe and inexpensive Hostels in the YHA Global Network. Youth Hostelling is rather popular in the UK and a night's stay will cost you £10-£20, depending on where you go.

Insurance

For about £150 a year, you can get comprehensive cover for all your belongings – your computer, mobile phone, shoes, watch, digital camera, clothes, etc. Please do note that all halls of residence are covered by insurance. Although the Halls of Residence are relatively safe, rooms, especially ground floor rooms still occasionally get broken into. Always remember to keep your door locked and window latched at all times, especially if you have many valuable items in your room.

Fresher's Fair

During the 1st week of term, the Student Union will organize a fair. All the societies and sports societies will try to entice you into joining their society. The usual joining fee is £3-4 a society.

There is a wide range of amazing societies to join and you will be tempted to join many, which is not advisable. Be selective and choose wisely

Illegal Activities

The following is a list of what students commonly dabble in.

Please note that you CAN be prosecuted for committing these criminal offences.

- Insurance fraud.
- Importing prohibited items such as drugs, pornographic material, and pirated media into the UK.
- Fare evasion on the public transport system.
- Evasion of duty payable to HM Customs and Excise - usually by not declaring the extra 600 cigarettes you bring in.
- Evasion of TV License fees.
- Driving without insurance and/or road tax.

Remember – it is **illegal** for a reason!

The Malaysian Students' Association (MSA)

With a record number of 280 members last year, the MSA is one of the largest and most active Cultural Societies in the University. We organise various makan events, talks, outings and sporting activities very regularly throughout the year, so as a member, you will always have something to look forward to! Regardless of your interests, MSA provides a platform for everyone to participate and engage in exciting new experiences to make full use of your limited time in university!

So what happened the past year? Among the events we organised were:

- **Malaysia Night** – The grandest largest most important cultural event of the year! Usually our Malaysia Night includes a play, musical performances and a variety of cultural dances, including our renowned **Dikir Barat**. (Warwick's Dikir Barat team is undoubtedly the best in the UK! Don't believe us? Check it out for yourself on youtube!) Our Malaysia Night 2011 attracted a record-breaking number of attendees (almost 900 people)! Most importantly, it was awarded the mega prestigious Best Social Event Award by the University of Warwick Student Union! You know you want to immerse yourself in MNight Mania!
- **Charity Night** – A night of performances and games all in the name of charity! This year we raised a massive £423.27, donated to the Borneo Child Aid Society and OrphanCare.
- **Warwick Games** – Annual sporting event – football, netball, basketball, badminton tournaments attended by other universities every year. This year, we introduced two new games - ultimate frisbee and touch rugby! Experience the Hari Sukan mood all the way in Warwick!

We also participated in

- **One World Week** – An international festival by the Students' Union, displaying many cultural activities such as the fashion show, cultural performances, food event and many others. This year our Dikir Barat performed at the OWW Music Festival and we rocked the house!
- **Nottingham Games** – annual sporting event hosted by Nottingham University.

This year we're introducing 3 new events:

- **Amazing WRace** – Ever watched The Amazing Race on TV? We're bringing it to you on our campus itself!
- **Editorial Board** – MSA's first ever magazine is in the works! And we are recruiting!
- **E-Games** – We now have a brand new e-games division! For any of you who have ever loved DoTA, this is for you!

Check us out at www.warwickmsa.co.uk ☺

The MSA and the International Office.

The International Office is located in the University House, on campus. If at all, you are having issues such as a problem with your student visa or your student status approval, the International Office may assist you. The team in the International Office have been very supportive of the MSA and its events and understands the requirements and needs of the Malaysian community in Warwick.

MSA Committee

Here are some contact details of us here in the MSA Committee. If you require more information or assistance, please **do not hesitate** to contact us. We would be more than glad to help you out! =)

MSA Committee 2010/11

President	Brenda	07848878115 012-3871837	brenda.wjc@gmail.com	Economics
Vice President	Khairul	07500904006	khairul.nadzrin@gmail.com	Accounting & Finance
Secretary	Li Tjen	07895881033 017-3009526	simlitjen@gmail.com	Economics
Treasurer	Wei Wen	07738084622 017-2210233	thum.wei.wen@gmail.com	Economics
Cultural Officer I	Arif	07500946482 017-3655152	arifzahlan@gmail.com	Accounting & Finance
Sports Officer I	Firdouse	07861086699 017-7955769	agr8086@yahoo.com	TESL

****There are still posts to be filled up! First years are strongly encouraged to run for the committee.***

All in all, we hope that this guide will be able to help you in finding your footing easier in Warwick! Have fun and don't forget to slot in times in your busy schedule to study!! Good luck!

Best Wishes,

Warwick MSA Execs 11/12

-THE END-