

The following article was created for My Guide to Uni App, an app made by students for students

Five things you should be prepared for as an international student

Did you know that moving to a new country and speaking a language that's not your main one drains all of your energy? Because I definitely didn't know that.

When preparing my move from Italy to the UK, I started to watch university-related Youtube videos on a daily basis.

I became aware that the accommodation I had chosen, Endcliffe, was 20 minutes by foot from the city centre, and that Sheffield was a *very* hilly town – which still shocked me when I actually had to go through it.

However, when it came to people, I had this strong feeling that it would have been easy making friends but, alas, I was wrong.

The **first aspect** I realised during my first year, which unfortunately was also during the lockdown era, that made it even harder to bond with people, is how tiring speaking in English is.

Just one brief interaction in the kitchen with my flatmates would leave me without energy for the rest of the day, alongside a sweet headache, something that I never really had, so be prepared for that.

Thinking back, I think it took a good year to get used to speaking in English without suffering from a headache, or just feeling tired, but I think it would have taken me way less without the lockdown.

The **second aspect** you should be prepared for is the cultural differences. I was already aware of how different locals would be from me, but it still affected me as I was trying to make friends.

It can be as silly as a simple night out to a club, and with a new friend group and a different way of approaching night outs, everything is simply different.

Depending on the group, I would either have the time of my life or be bored to death.

Surprisingly, food is **another aspect** that made me feel like an alien. Being used to Italian food, I thought our pre-made sauces, pasta, biscuits and common ingredients such as truffle oil would be items that the whole world has.

Of course, I was wrong.

My Mediterranean diet started to lean more towards an Asian one as there are tons of products and shops specifically for Asian food, which are not that common back home.

I ended up losing one *cuisine* but got to know a new one, which I don't mind at all.

The **last aspect** that still shocked me even though I was aware of it was really the weather. I thought I would never be affected by the weather, but in the end I was.

It's unpredictable, most of the time windy and if you combine that with any type of rain you get the coldest weather ever.

Bonus, but not really: UK phone number

The moment you're breathing UK rainy air, stop by the first shop that sells SIM cards and buy one, otherwise you'll end up like me – with no kitchen and bedroom essentials on your first night at the accommodation.

I had missed the delivery because the delivery guy couldn't call my Italian number, so don't be like me – get your new number and update any expected delivery details with that.