

GUIDE TO BEING A

# BUDDY



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK  
OILSCOIL LUIMNIGH

**INTERNATIONAL  
BUDDY  
PROGRAMME**

## Thanks for being a Buddy!

This booklet has information about the International Buddy Programme, which every year matches several hundred UL students with newly arrived international students from all over the world. As with anyone that moves to a new area or enrolls in college, our international students need a little help and guidance in their initial few weeks in the University. Your role, as a Buddy, is to help make their transition to life in Limerick go smoothly by being open, flexible and responsive to their needs.

Every year, over 1,700 new international students enrol in UL on a wide variety of different programmes. Students may be doing full-time undergraduate or postgraduate programmes, or partaking in Erasmus, Study Abroad or Exchange programmes.



**He has given me so many recommendations and helpful tips about school and life in Ireland.**

Madison, USA



**She encouraged me to join clubs and societies and is always available to chat if I need help.**

Jessica, USA

# Buddy Basics

## YOUR ROLE AS A BUDDY IS TO:

- Be a friendly welcoming face to approximately two to four Buddies
- Commit 12-20 hours a semester to your Buddy and to the Programme
- Show you are interested in getting to know and interacting with your Buddy
- Maintain contact, even if your Buddy is feeling 'at home'
- Be a good representative of the University of Limerick and Ireland
- Attend a training workshop

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE TO:

- Make contact via email with your Buddy at least four weeks in advance of the new term
- Answer queries, provide information on the University and the locality on an on-going basis
- Initiate a meeting with your Buddy upon their arrival in Limerick
- Take part in the Buddy events organised by the International Education Division
- Collect tickets on behalf of your Buddies for events

**Remember, when interacting with your Buddy you are an ambassador of the University of Limerick and Ireland. You have a large role to play in giving them a positive first impression of the country and to make them feel welcome in their new home for the next number of months. Make an effort to connect with your Buddy and support them – be friendly, clear and open.**

## How the Buddy Programme Works

- The University of Limerick International Buddy Programme runs in the spring and autumn semesters.
- The International Education Division receives a Buddy request from a new international student and finds a matching volunteer for them.
- We match people according to their area of study, faculty, language capability and we endeavour to accommodate specific requests but cannot always do so.
- We email you the details of your international Buddy.
- You make contact with your Buddy and organise your first meeting with them.

## Perks of Being a Buddy

- Chance to practice your language skills
- Learn about new cultures
- Help students from your own academic background
- Make friends with people from a different background
- Develop your communication skills
- Potentially receive a President's Volunteer Award.

*The President's Volunteer Award was established to harness, acknowledge and support the contribution that student volunteers at the University make to their communities. Participation in the Buddy Programme can be used to go towards your volunteering hours, which are necessary for earning a Gold, Silver or Bronze Award.*

## Buddy Programme Events

Each semester, the International Education Division organises a number of events for you and your Buddies to attend. These vary from movie nights to traditional Irish music sessions to roller jams! By signing up for the Buddy Programme, you have been added to our mailing list and will be notified of all events we have planned.

You are not obliged to attend these events but you are required to notify your Buddy of them as the responsibility is on you to collect their tickets for such events, even if you do not plan to go.



**He made lists for me with shops I might find useful and sent me links to good food delivery services.**

Daniela, Austria



**She explained a lot to me about life in UL and helped me feel much more comfortable here.**

Ngoc, Vietnam

## Things to do with your Buddy

On top of organising various events, we will provide tea/coffee vouchers for you and your Buddies for your first meeting. We would also encourage you to take the initiative to plan activities for you and your Buddies, particularly ones that give them a taste of Irish life. When planning such events, it's important to bear in mind that other cultures have different ideas about what is an enjoyable and appropriate way to spend one's leisure time. If you have any ideas for events that you'd like to share with us, email the Buddy Programme Coordinator at [buddyprogramme@ul.ie](mailto:buddyprogramme@ul.ie).

## Communicating with your Buddy

Maintain contact with your Buddy and email them regularly. Periods such as the lead-up to mid-term breaks and the end of semester are when they may need some extra support and advice from you. Think carefully about how you communicate and how this may come across to someone from a different background. It can be easy to forget that we have a quite unique way of communicating in Ireland that might not always be easy for visitors to comprehend!

## Contacting Us

If you are interested in partaking in the International Buddy Programme, feel free to make any enquiries to our Buddy Programme Coordinator by emailing [buddyprogramme@ul.ie](mailto:buddyprogramme@ul.ie). You can also find the application form to partake in the Buddy Programme on our website [www.ul.ie/international](http://www.ul.ie/international).

If you are a participant on the International Buddy Programme, or you are thinking about signing up, then we are happy to provide guidance and answer any questions you may have. In fact, we're keen to hear how you and your new friends are getting on so please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any ideas, suggestions or concerns.

To get in touch with us, you can either email the Buddy Programme Coordinator or you can simply come into the International Education Division in UL, which is located in EO-030 in the Main Building.

Our office hours are 9.30am – 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 4.30pm.



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