



BASIC GUIDE TO STARTING A

CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION BUSINESS

It is not just young people who stay in Campus Accommodation, but people from all walks of life and every corner of the world. Campus Accommodation provides a great way to meet new people and experience new things, which is why they appeal to such a diverse range. More frequently, Campus Accommodation also receives people who are looking for a quick, inexpensive place to stay without the cost or formality of other types of accommodation.

What is Campus Accommodation?

In essence, Campus Accommodation is provided by educational establishments for their students and is available to visitors (individuals, families or groups) at certain times of the year. The establishment provides overnight sleeping accommodation in separate bedrooms and a service for the regular cleaning of visitors' bedrooms, bathrooms and public areas.

What is Certification and why is it required?

Tourism legislation requires all tourism/visitor accommodation to hold a current Tourism Northern Ireland (NI) certificate. This involves a visit to the property from a member of Tourism NI's certification team, who will inspect the property to ensure it meets certification requirements. Under current legislation, a statutory (legal) inspection of the premises is undertaken every four years. A certificate issued by Tourism NI, following this inspection, is valid for four years.

How do I Apply?

Applications can be submitted online at <https://forms.tourismni.com/Forms/>, accompanied by a fee. At the time of printing, £20 is payable for every room you intend to let, subject to a minimum fee of £80 and maximum of £200.

Payment and application can also be made by post, or by visiting Tourism NI's offices. You can request an application pack by contacting the Quality & Standards team by email to qa@tourismni.com or telephone 028 90 441545. When a completed application form and fee are received, a member of Tourism NI's inspection team will contact you to arrange a suitable time and date for the visit.

Minimum and Recommended Criteria

The requirements and recommendations set out here are intended for guidance; they are not comprehensive. During an inspection you will be advised on matters specific to your property, however, inspections do not cover all aspects of tourist accommodation; it is the responsibility of all certified operators/owners to make every reasonable effort to ensure that visitors enjoy a safe and secure stay. As part of your duty of care to visitors, you should remain vigilant of potential risk to visitors and of how you describe your premises in marketing and promotion.



About the Inspection

The Exterior

The inspection process starts when the inspector arrives at the property. They will look at the exterior appearance to make sure the paintwork is in good order and that the car-parking areas, paths and grounds are well-maintained and safe.

Structural and Safety Requirements



Your establishment should be of substantial and durable construction, structurally safe, in good repair throughout and of suitable design. It should be in good decorative order and kept clean and well maintained throughout the property.

Visitor Access

Adequate arrangements must be in place for the arrival and departure of guests at the property. Visitors shall have access to the establishment at all times by such means as may be stipulated by the establishment.

Display of Certificate and Charges

Your Tourism NI Certificate and scale of charges for accommodation in each unit must be prominently displayed, easily seen by visitors before, or immediately after, they enter. If your rates vary seasonally, or if there is any condition to be satisfied (e.g. ageeligibility for children's rates), or any other charges not included in the rate, then these must be displayed. Charges for extra facilities such as internet usage, etc, should also be displayed unless these are included in the rate. All charges should be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.



Tourist Literature

A selection of current leaflets, brochures, maps and other literature relating to your locality should be available.

Visitors' Register

As well as the name, address and dates of arrival/departure, you are legally required to record each visitor's nationality.

Instructions

Any house rules you wish to be observed, or any other information which would be of interest to guests/potential guests e.g. WIFI code, should be brought to the guests' attention at the earliest opportunity.

A guest information folder is a useful way to relay information and can be provided on guests' arrival. This should also contain copies of instructions on operating equipment and other items.

Dining Area



The dining area must be sufficiently large to cater to the number of guests who may reasonably be expected to use it at any one time.

Campus Accommodation may provide one or more dining areas with furniture, fittings and equipment of good quality and condition.

Kitchen Area

Campus Accommodation may provide one or more kitchen areas for use by the establishment to provide meals for visitors or; provide one or more kitchens for use by visitors to prepare meals. Where provided, the kitchen together with any associated service areas should contain facilities, fittings and equipment of good quality and condition, which are easily cleaned. These should be adequate for the storage, refrigeration, preparation, cooking and service of food for the maximum number of visitors capable of being seated in the dining area and adequate for the storage and cleaning of all associated utensils. The kitchen must also be adequately ventilated and adjacent to, or easily accessible from a dining area.

Garbage should be removed from the premises at least twice weekly and should not be stored in the kitchen area.



Visitors' Bedrooms



Rooms should be numbered, lettered or otherwise designated so as to identify them and should be of adequate size for the number of visitors the room is intended to hold. Each bedroom should have separate access from the corridor, and the door must be lockable. The rooms must contain furniture, fittings and equipment of good quality and condition for sleeping and toilet purposes and for the storage of visitors' clothing.



In general, these furnishings should include a bed/beds for each visitor the room is intended to hold, complete with interior sprung mattress or suitable equivalent; a supply of clean linen, blankets or duvets and pillows; loose or built-in units comprising wardrobe or cupboard, dressing table, mirror and drawer space for clothes; a bedside chair and table; a waste bin; a carpet or floor surface of suitable design; and window curtains or blinds for privacy and the exclusion of light.

Bathroom and Toilets

Campus Accommodation offering bedrooms which do not have en-suite bathrooms should provide at least one bathroom for every 15 visitors.



Each bathroom should contain a bath or shower, WC and washhand basin of good quality and condition, with plumbing in good working order to ensure a continuous supply of hot and cold water and the disposal of waste water. In each en-suite bathroom (if any) there should be a bath or shower, a WC and (unless one is already provided in the bedroom) a wash hand basin, of good quality and condition, with a continuous supply of hot and cold water.

Bathrooms and toilets should have an effective means of ventilation and shall be equipped with a suitable locking device, mirror, towel rails, clothes hooks, bath mat and a clean and ample supply of toilet requisites including towels, soap and toilet paper.

Heating, Lighting and Ventilation

The establishment should contain effective means of natural lighting and ventilation and have a means of heating capable of maintaining, when required, a room temperature of at least 18.5 degrees Celsius.

Services

The establishment should be under the supervision of a person trained or experienced in Campus or similar accommodation management and shall be staffed by persons adequate in number and training to maintain appropriate standards of service for visitors at all reasonable times.

In addition there should also be a means for guests to summon the attention of staff as required. There should be a service for the regular cleaning of visitors' bedrooms, bathrooms and public areas.

Inspection Outcome and Advice

Following the inspection of the property there will be time to discuss the outcome of the inspection and, where there are conditions on the certificate, they will be discussed with you and an agreed timeframe set i.e. not less than 30 days for the work to be completed.

The certification officer will also advise you on a number of other additional areas such as creating and maintaining your presence on the discovernorthernireland.com website and other relevant sites, obtaining public liability insurance, best practice and operational standards.

After the Inspection

In normal circumstances, a certificate will be posted to you within a few weeks. Sometimes a follow-up inspection is required, usually within a month, where there are facilities yet to be provided. There may be a need for the inspector to return for this final check, but there is no charge for this.

Tourist Signage (White on Brown)

If you are interested in obtaining 'White on Brown' tourist signage, you should contact your local council Tourism Officer who can provide you with an application form. Local councils co-ordinate the application process for white on brown tourist signs which involves liaising with Tourism NI and Transport NI. You can also download a signage application form and a copy of the joint Transport NI – Tourism NI Tourist Signing Policy from <https://tourismni.com/Grow-Your-Business/tourist-signing--brown-signs/>

Advertising Signage

External advertising signage, either in the grounds of your facility or in any other public space, may require planning permission.

Tourism NI recommends that you discuss any proposed external advertising signage with the planning team at your local council prior to erection. Do not claim to be 'Tourism NI Recommended' or 'Approved'; you may indicate that you have a Tourism NI Certificate, if you wish.



Marketing

Successful marketing is important for every business and your accommodation business is no different. You could have the most desirable property in your area, but without marketing, no one will know about it.

It is important that the cost of marketing your business is considered early in the planning stage. It is unlikely that the cost of marketing your business will be a one-off payment, so consider marketing as a running business cost and build this into your business plan.

Once your property has been certified, you can avail of a free, bookable business listing on [discovernorthernireland.com](https://www.discovernorthernireland.com). It is important that your listing remains up to date with good quality content and photography.

If you would like to list your business on the Discover Northern Ireland website, you will need to complete a one-off registration. Once you have completed the product registration you will be able to update your listings via the new Product Manager.

You can register via Tourism NI's Business Hub:
<https://www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/business-support/how-to-guide>

Whilst this website provides a great platform for going online, we recommend that you do not solely rely on this to drive business, but rather use it as part of your overall marketing plan.

Tourism NI also have a large following across a variety of social media platforms. If you have interesting or engaging content you would like to share about your business, you can send your stories to digital@tourismni.com for consideration. Similarly, if you have a special offer, you will be able to submit your accommodation offers for placement on [discovernorthernireland.com](https://www.discovernorthernireland.com)

Social Media

Providers are encouraged to direct guests to online review sites or Social Media platforms to post a review of their experience. Customer reviews can highlight positive experiences; verified tips and useful observations. Generating positive feedback may influence potential customers when researching or booking accommodation.

Aim for Excellence

Tourism NI encourages all operators to aim for excellence. By providing enhanced facilities, amenities and additional services, you are more likely to obtain a higher letting rate, be more assured of higher occupancy for longer periods and be more likely to generate profits. These need not involve great capital outlay, but can add considerably to your product.

Here are just a few ideas:

- High speed Wi-Fi
- Hire of bikes
- Gym
- Provision of services such as food delivery, local bus timetable information, etc.
- Cinema room
- On site shop
- BBQ area
- Launderette/ironing facilities

Guests will be encouraged to stay longer if you have something special to offer. Read the promotional literature from Campus establishments elsewhere for cost-effective ideas which can be adapted for your establishment whatever its size. You should also look at the existing establishments in your intended area of operation, the facilities they offer and the rates charged.

Environmental Consideration

Tourism NI, in its promotion of sensible, sensitive and sustainable tourism, encourages 'good housekeeping' schemes such as recycling, energy conservation and waste minimisation.

For further information on addressing environmental impacts, available online at <https://www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/business-support/sustainability/>



Useful Websites

Tourism Northern Ireland - Further Information

<https://tourismni.com/startup-advice/>

Tourism Northern Ireland - Online Certification

<https://forms.tourismni.com/Forms/>

Tourism Northern Ireland – Facts and Figures

<https://tourismni.com/facts-and-figures/>

Tourism Northern Ireland - Signage Policy

www.tourismni.com/touristsigning

Discover Northern Ireland Website

www.discovernorthernireland.com

Tourism Northern Ireland - People and Skills

www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/business-support/hr-and-people-support/

Divisional Planning Office

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/planning-offices-ni>

HM Revenue & Customs

(for implications of starting a business and VAT considerations)

www.hmrc.gov.uk

Music License Information for Public Areas

(for details on how to obtain a music license when playing music in a public area)

www.ppluk.com

www.prsformusic.com

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

www.nifrs.org

Health and Safety Advice for Small Businesses

(to help manage health and safety in the workplace and relevant legislation)

www.hseni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

(for information regarding the registration of private water supplies to holiday accommodation)

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/private-water-supplies

The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992

(copies of all regulations can be obtained from The Stationary Office, Arthur Street, Belfast)

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1992/235/made



Contact details for further information

For more information/application forms
for certification contact the Quality and
Standards Department:

Tel: 028 9044 1545

You can also email this department at
qa@tourismni.com or write to us at our offices at:
**Tourism Northern Ireland, Floors 10-12 Linum
Chambers, Bedford Square, Bedford Street,
Belfast, BT2 7ES.**