

# Homesickness

Being away from home requires that we learn to become more self-reliant, however, as there are lots of new experiences and it can be a time of great change it is likely to be challenging.

**Will it always feel like this?** Usually homesickness is temporary and many are aware of an improvement within a short period of time and this gives hope that soon all feelings of homesickness will disappear. For others it takes longer or may return briefly after a visit home.

Fortunately, there are things that can help with settling in and coping with homesickness.

- Make your room as comfortable and welcoming as you can. Personal touches, including favourite things from home, give the place an identity and make it a good place to be.
- Get to know where you are. Not knowing anything about your surroundings tends to add to homesickness so make the effort to get to know the parts of the university you will need to use as soon as you can. The same goes for the world off campus; the sooner you know where you will shop, where you will socialize, etc., the easier it will be.
- Meeting tutors and finding out about your course can help you deal with worries about what will be expected of you and what staff will be like.
- Explore the Learning Resources Centre (library) and find out where the books and other materials related to your course are kept.
- Check out the Students' Union for social life and also find out about the other services they provide for students.
- Establish a routine. This will be one of the main things missing from your early days at university; each day will be different. You may appear to have plenty of free time when you look at your timetable and may feel 'lost' until you begin adding regular activities. A routine gives your life a rhythm again, making it more predictable and this in turn can lead to feeling more secure and in control.
- Give yourself time to settle in; decide to review how you're doing in a week – you may well feel more settled then. Realise your feelings are quite natural.
- Maybe you could invite your family or friends to visit you here so that you can share your new life with them. In that way, when you talk to them about university in the future, they will have a better idea of what you are talking about and the conversation will be more meaningful for all. This helps bridge the gap between two important aspects of your life.