

# budgeting and money saving tips

## Can you live well on a student budget?

### why budget?

Many students find it hard to live on a student budget so here are some tips to help you.

Tracking spending sounds dull and hard work but if you have ever gone out with cash in your pocket and wondered where it all went, try tracking your spending for a few days and see how much of that spending was essential.

If you can, set a budget and stick to it. Good ways of doing this are an online tool, phone app or just a spreadsheet.

It can be easier to track your spending if you pay with cash. Using contactless payment or a phone app can be just too easy. Consider only withdrawing a fiver or a tenner at a time. Frequent trips to the cashpoint will make sure you are aware of how much you are spending.

There are two ways to balance your budget – minimise costs and maximise income. Here are a few ideas on how to keep costs down:

### shopping

- Buy an NUS Extra card from Union Reception. They are £12 and give access to great discounts. For details see: [www.nus.org.uk/en/nus-extra/discounts/](http://www.nus.org.uk/en/nus-extra/discounts/).

- Get together with your housemates and buy staples like rice, pasta or tins in bulk - it is much cheaper.
- Get that bulk buy delivered by the supermarket. Delivery can save bus fares and is cheaper at less popular times
- Look out for “red label” bargains at the end of the day.
- Share a “buy one, get one free” offer with a friend.
- Avoid food shopping when you are hungry.
- Buy newspapers from the Shop; several papers are sold at a discount.
- Sanitary products are sold at cost (i.e. without VAT being added) at the Shop.
- Check out the weekly special offers at the Shop.
- Shop at markets if you can. They are often cheaper than supermarkets for fresh seasonal produce.
- Ask retail outlets if they offer student discounts - if you don't ask you won't get a discount

- Avoid cash points which charge for withdrawals and find ones which will dispense five pound notes.

## eating

- Plan a weekly menu before your big shop.
- Use a student cookbook.
- Learn to make the best of leftovers. (Curry for breakfast?)
- Try not to buy ready meals or takeaways too often. They are much more expensive (and can be less healthy). Instead, how about batch cooking your favourite stuff and freezing your own ready meals?
- Make your own lunch & bring a thermos of tea or coffee. Buying lunch and hot drinks on campus is nice, but the cost does add up.
- Restaurants - ask about student discounts and look out for special deals like student nights/deals. Take advantage of fixed price all you can eat buffets.
- Grow your own herbs on a windowsill. They perk up your cooking and it's way cheaper than the expensive supermarket packs.

## drinking

If you drink alcohol, here are some ways to cut the cost:

- Avoid buying rounds – agree with your friends to buy your own drinks. It is cheaper and saves you trying to compete with someone twice your size on the drinking front.
- Use the Red Bar and the Blue Bar. They are handy, and have loads of deals. You are guaranteed to see your mates there.

Alternate soft drinks and alcoholic drinks to keep the cost down.

- Find out when the student nights are. Keep an eye out for happy hours, special offers and places that offer free drinks if you go in fancy dress.
- Brew your own. It is cheap and fun!
- Sharing a bottle of wine can work out cheaper than buying lots of beers/shots.

## free time

- Sportspark – use of the pool is just £2.55 for students at off-peak times (gym: £3).
- Join a Union club or society as a cheap way of pursuing a hobby/sport or learning something new.
- Check out student drama, film showings and box set marathons for free entertainment.
- Look out for student offers or free entertainment such as festivals and exhibitions (the Sainsbury Centre is free for UEA students and on campus, so go at least once before you graduate).
- When going out take cash instead of card to avoid spending far more than you intended.
- For treats and special occasions, look out for online discount deals from sites like Voucher or Groupon.
- Join the local library: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries-local-history-and-archives/libraries](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries-local-history-and-archives/libraries).
- Volunteer! It's fun, cheap and looks great on your CV.

## study

- Text books are pricey. If you can, borrow a copy from the library. They can request loan copies of rarer books from other libraries. If not, consider buying second-hand or online.
- Check out sources of grants for study related travel or other major expenses. Search for grants here at: [www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support](http://www.turn2us.org.uk/Get-Support).

## travel

- Use student rail/coach/ISIC card and save a small fortune visiting loved ones and seeing the world.
- Book ahead to get cheap deals on long distance travel
- Travel by bike. It is clean, cheap and keeps you fit.
- Season bus tickets usually work out cheaper than individual tickets for regular journeys. Download the mTicket app or buy online at: [www.firstgroup.com/norfolk-suffolk/tickets/ticket-types/student-bus-travel](http://www.firstgroup.com/norfolk-suffolk/tickets/ticket-types/student-bus-travel).
- If you are planning a trip, borrow travel guides from the local library.
- Find a car share if you travel in from a distance – save on fuel and parking.

## phone

- Shop around carefully for a phone contract. Most providers will provide “sim only” 30-day rolling contracts which often provide good value.
- Consider insuring your smartphone – it’s expensive to have a smashed screen repaired.

- Take care not to incur heavy data costs – use Wi-Fi whenever you can. There are a number of apps you can download to make calls over Wi-Fi.
- If money is tight, postpone getting that upgrade.

## work

- Many students work during term-time. See [www.uea.su/union/jobs/careerstaffroles/](http://www.uea.su/union/jobs/careerstaffroles/) for jobs at the union or visit Careers Central which advertises student jobs. Campus work pays well, and the managers understand your course constraints better than many other employers would.

## health

If you need regular prescriptions consider a pre-payment certificate or apply for help with prescription costs under the NHS low-income scheme at: [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme).

This can also provide help with dental treatment, sight tests and glasses or contact lenses.

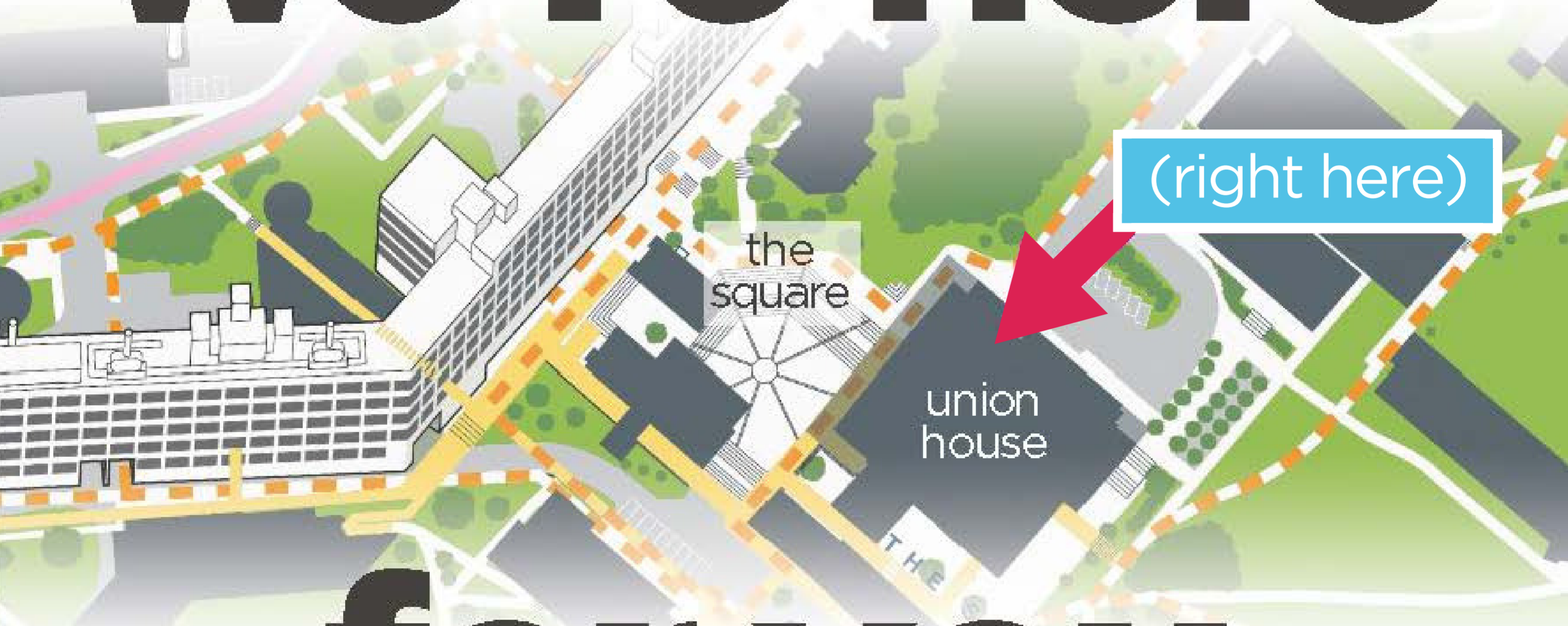
Remember you can pick up free condoms at Union House or the Nightline office.

## budgeting help

Try the Money Advice Service budget calculator at: [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner) or their cost-cutting tools to find ways to cut your spending at: [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/categories/cutting-costs](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/categories/cutting-costs).

**If you run into financial difficulty contact advice(su) for help.**

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