# Support with transition to University for students with autism at University College

University College provides an enhanced orientation for new students on the autism spectrum. Offer-holders are invited for an overnight, individual familiarisation visit in March each year. The student is sent a detailed itinerary for the day. A student guide gives a tour of the college and the offer-holder meets with their Disability Coordinator in the college. This also provides an opportunity to talk through what the student can expect from the social side of University life, and what support is available for this. In the afternoon, the student visits the department where they talk with the departmental disability coordinator and receive a tour of the department.

The benefits for students with autism are:

* Enables them to gain a clear idea of what living in college will be like well ahead of their first term, without the added pressures associated with interviews and fresher’s week;
* If the student experiences sensory overload, the visit takes place outside term time so they can become comfortable with the new environment in a way which will limits anxiety for them.

The familiarisation visit has since been extended to students with chronic anxiety who experience similar benefits from this orientation, designed to be low-stakes and low-stress.

In September, depending on their individual needs, students with autism will receive an ‘introduction to college’ guide. The document is personally tailored to each student, depending on their requirements and needs.

The guide may contain:

* Photographs of the key people the student will encounter in the college (their subject tutors, disability coordinator).
* A glossary of common Oxford terminology (e.g. Michaelmas, matriculation, collections).
* A visual and text description of the college locations they will most frequently visit (JCR, Department, laundry room – further locations could be included if helpful).
* Descriptions of new events they will encounter in their first year (e.g. matriculation, collections, college bops, end of year exams), so they can read this section as they approach each of these events for the first time.
* A timetable for their first term, as well as a suggested daily timetable.
* [Transition to University for Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum](http://eprints.brighton.ac.uk/15099/1/transition%20to%20HE.pdf), Tara Sims, School of Health and Social Care, London South Bank University