

This document is not intended to be used as a comprehensive guide, but has been produced to help you decide whether or not your premises will meet the regulations and recommendations relating to Campus Accommodation establishments which are designed to help fulfill the expectations of visitors to Northern Ireland.

There are a number of considerations in relation to starting Campus Accommodation and you are urged to seek professional advice before embarking on such an enterprise. In addition, you must comply with all relevant legislation, in particular The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992.

What is Campus Accommodation?

Under The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, there are eight categories of accommodation regulated by Tourism Northern Ireland namely, hotel, guest house, B&B, self-catering, hostel, bunk house, guest accommodation and 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.

Certification

Under The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, certification is **mandatory** for every establishment offering visitor accommodation. To apply to be certified by Tourism Northern Ireland you can either apply and pay online via www.tourismni.com/forms or complete form 2, and submit this, together with other relevant documentation (see information pack letter) and fee (£20 for each bedroom provided for visitors subject to a minimum of £80 and a maximum of £200). This fee contributes towards the cost of an inspection and is payable in advance for the first inspection. Statutory inspections take place once every four years although Tourism Northern Ireland can undertake an inspection at any time. The purpose of inspections is to ensure that the requirements appropriate to the Campus accommodation category continue to be met. If not, Tourism Northern Ireland may add conditions to the certificate or revoke it. All documentation referred to is available at www.tourismni.com or by contacting the Quality & Standards department (details at end of this document).

A Certification Officer will conduct an inspection to determine if the premises can be allocated to the Campus accommodation category. If a certificate is issued, your premises is a Certified Tourist Establishment and you may start trading. The forms and checklist are available at www.tourismni.com/accommodation.

Aim for Excellence

Tourism Northern Ireland encourages all operators to aim for excellence, whatever the size of the proposed project. 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, for example the provision of a games room, internet facilities, or café.

Read the promotional literature from Campus Accommodation establishments elsewhere for cost-effective ideas which can be adapted for your establishment and look at the facilities offered and rates charged. Facts about accommodation in Northern Ireland are available on www.tourismni.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com.

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.

When you are thinking about your marketing options, consider who is your target market. Will you be marketing your business towards families, couples or outdoor adventurers? Once you have established who your target market is, then you can decide how best get the message out about your property.

Traditional marketing methods can be very effective for some businesses, however having an online presence is vital and there is an expectation from consumers that your business is fully accessible online. Once certified by Tourism NI, you can avail of a complimentary entry onto our consumer website discovernorthernireland.com. 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.

You may also want to think about integrating social media, an online payment facility, using online booking agents and search engine optimisation (the process of affecting how high your property will appear in search engine results) to aid the marketing of your business. There will be costs associated with these. Facebook, for business purposes, is increasingly becoming a paid platform. You can also pay for increased exposure on Twitter. Online booking agents charge fees and each one will vary. However, there is scope to capture your visitors details and encourage them to contact you directly if they are planning a return visit. This means you can avoid losing commission on repeat bookings.

Tourism NI 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. There are also a number of bespoke marketing campaigns which Tourism NI run throughout the year and you will be notified about each one with the option of sending in seasonal offers.

Types of Visitor

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 that are looking for a quick, inexpensive place to stay without the cost or formality of other types of accommodation.

Environmental Consideration

Tourism Northern Ireland, 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, download Tourism NI's 'Going Green' Guide from www.tourismni.com (see Business Support/Grow Your Business/Sustainable Tourism).

Tourist Signage (White on Brown)

If you are interested in obtaining 'White on Brown' tourist signage, you should contact our local council Tourism Officer who can provide you with an application form. Local councils coordinate 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 www.tourismni.com (see business support/legal and licensing/tourist signing).

Minimum and recommended criteria

The requirements and recommendations set out here are for guidance; they aren't comprehensive. During an inspection you will be advised on matters not specifically detailed here, however, statutory inspections do not cover all aspects of tourist accommodation; it is the responsibility of certified premises 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.

The following list sets out minimum requirements for Campus Accommodation establishments under **Schedule 7 of the Categories of Tourist Establishment (Statutory Criteria) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011**. It also contains Tourism Northern Ireland recommendations, in italics. All criteria should be interpreted in such a way that your guests will be impressed by the quality of your facilities. This outline is not in order of priority; it goes through the requirements approximately in the sequence they will be encountered by visitors.

Advertising Signage: External advertising signage, either in the grounds of your facility or in any other public space, may require planning permission. Tourism Northern Ireland 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 Northern Ireland Recommended' or 'Approved'**; you may indicate that you have a Tourism Northern Ireland Certificate, if you wish. You should consult with Tourism Northern Ireland in relation to the wording of your sign.

Display of Certificate and Charges: Your Tourism Northern Ireland Certificate and scale of charges for accommodation must be prominently displayed, easily seen by visitors before, or immediately after, they enter. 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.

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

Tourist Literature: A selection of current leaflets, brochures, maps and other literature relating to your locality should be available. It is a good idea to review these periodically to ensure that the information provided is still current.

Structural and Safety Requirements: Your establishment should be of substantial and durable construction, structurally safe and in good repair throughout, and of suitable design. It should be in good decorative order and kept clean and well maintained throughout, including outdoor areas, grounds and car park areas.

Visitor Access: The establishment shall have adequate arrangements to deal with arriving and departing visitors. Visitors shall have access to the establishment at all times by such means as may be stipulated by the establishment.

Dining Areas: Campus Accommodation may provide one or more dining areas with furniture, fittings and equipment of good quality and condition and provide adequate space for the number of visitors who may reasonably be expected to use it at any one time.

Kitchen Areas: 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 facilities, fittings and equipment 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.

Sleeping accommodation: Visitors' bedrooms 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, have a suitable locking device on any door opening onto a corridor; and contain furniture, fittings and equipment of good quality and condition for sleeping and toilet purposes and for the storage of visitors' clothing.

Such furniture, fittings and equipment 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.

Bathrooms and Toilets: Where the establishment contains bedrooms which do not have ensuite bathrooms it should provide at least one bathroom for every 15 visitors and one WC with wash hand basin, suitably located for visitor use, for every 15 visitors. In each bathroom there should be a bath or shower, of good quality and condition, with a continuous supply of hot and cold water. In each ensuite 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 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. 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.

Useful Websites

- Tourism Northern Ireland's website www.tourismni.com/accommodation for further copies of this document
- Tourism Northern Ireland's website www.tourismni.com/research for facts and figures
- Tourism Northern Ireland's website www.tourismni.com/forms to apply online for certification
- Tourism Northern Ireland's consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com
- www.welcometoexcellenceni.com – information about customer service training programmes to assist the industry provide first class standards of service
- Divisional Planning Office www.planningni.gov.uk
- Tourist Signage Policy www.tourismni.com (see business support)
- Music License requirement www.ppluk.com and www.prsformusic.com (for details on how to obtain a music license when playing music in a public area)
- Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service www.nifrs.org
- HM Revenue & Customs www.hmrc.gov.uk (for implications of starting a business and VAT considerations)
- The Health and Safety Works NI www.healthandsafetyworksni.gov.uk – A guide for small businesses to help manage health and safety in the workplace and relevant legislation
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency www.ni-environment.gov.uk/private_water.shtml
- Information regarding the registration of private water supplies to holiday accommodation

- A copy of The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 can be viewed at www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1992/uksi_19920235_en_1.htm. Copies of all Tourism regulations can be obtained from The Stationery Office, Arthur Street, Belfast.
- Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs)

Contact details for further information:

For more information/application forms for certification contact any of the following staff in the Quality & Standards Department:

Diane Lynas	90441686
Damien Murray	90441545

You can also email this department at qa@tourismni.com or write to us at our offices:

Tourism Northern Ireland
Floors 10-12 Linum Chambers
Bedford Square
Bedford Street
Belfast BT2 7ES

To request a copy of this document on disc or in other accessible formats, please contact the Quality & Standards department.

