Over the Christmas and New Year season, from the end of the day on Tuesday 23rd December to the start of the day on Monday 5th January, the University will be closed. So most facilities and departments will be unavailable or will have reduced availability during this time.

Part of the Chaplaincy will be available to students throughout this time, from 8:30am to 10:30pm, so please feel free to use it as somewhere to meet up with other students in a warm, friendly environment, perhaps to watch DVDs on your laptop, read newspapers or play board games.

Although shops and banks may open for longer hours just before Christmas, they will likely be open less from December 24th until January 5th. There will also be a reduced service on trains and buses during this time and taxis may be more expensive than usual.

However there will also be some local festive events that are fun to attend. Birmingham is well known for its huge German-themed Christmas market which will run until 22nd December allowing you to try many tasty foods and drinks and perhaps buy some of the handcrafted gifts. At the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry or at the Royal Spa Centre in Leamington you could see a traditional Christmas Pantomime – Aladdin in Coventry or Cinderella in Leamington. Incidentally, pantomimes are very different to mimes: the actors in pantomimes do talk and tell jokes (some of them very old!) and there tends to be a lot of audience interaction. Or for something more serene there are details of Christmas Carol services at Coventry Cathedral at www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/whats-on/advent-and-christmas.php

Season’s Greetings!

Although term finishes on Friday 5th December, the International Office remains open until Tuesday 23rd December so you are welcome to phone, email or come in to see us as usual until then.

On the evening of Wednesday 10th December the International Office is hosting its annual Christmas Party for students who are still around. This event is always an enjoyable time and includes a Christmas dinner, mince pie and drink for the price of £7 per person as well as carols and other fun. To make sure you don’t miss out please make sure you buy your ticket in advance as places are limited. To do this, and to find out more details about the Christmas Party please go to http://bit.ly/1rD1Nqc. Families are very welcome, in fact children can come for free and can meet Father Christmas at the event.

We have made a listings page of activities to do in the local area at https://bit.ly/11I87WJ. There will also be updates on www.facebook.com/groups/317243861816249. You may also want to use the facebook page to contact other students who are staying on campus over Christmas.

Global Christmas Party 2014

Global Connections

Connecting you to the International Office at the University of Warwick

Global Christmas Party 2014

Christmas Supper 2012
Christmas traditions

Often it’s children who look forward to Christmas the most. When they are young they are encouraged to believe in Santa Claus, who’s also known by his more traditional name of Father Christmas.

The children get very excited on the day before Christmas (Christmas Eve) because they are waiting for him to come with his sack full of presents. They are told how he has a sleigh pulled by reindeer that flies at night on Christmas Eve, visiting each home where he delivers presents by climbing down the chimney while everyone is asleep and putting presents into stockings which are hung up on the mantelpiece. Father Christmas lives at the North Pole and wears a red fur-lined suit.

The adults are probably more interested in traditional Christmas food, particularly Christmas Dinner, which is usually roast turkey with cranberry sauce and many vegetables. This is followed by Christmas Pudding, made from dried fruits. Sometimes the whole pudding is covered with brandy and deliberately set on fire before eating! Back in the 16th Century, Puritans banned Christmas in England because it had become a time for gambling and overindulgence in eating and drinking.

A Christmas dinner tradition that doesn’t involve food or drink is the pulling of Christmas Crackers. They make a loud bang, and open to reveal party hats, toys and silly jokes to read. Later in the day Christmas Cake may be served, which is a rich fruit cake covered with marzipan and decorated with icing. Mince pies are also eaten at this time of year. In this context mince does not mean a form of meat, instead it’s another kind of cake, once again made with dried fruit like raisins. Christmas is certainly not a time for dieting!

Office closure and visa applications

The International Office will close for Christmas on 23rd December and reopen on 5th January. If your visa is due to expire during this time please make an appointment to meet with an adviser as soon as possible beforehand - do not wait until the office re-opens.

Continuing students travelling during the vacation with visas due to expire shortly after their return to the UK are advised to carry an up to date student status letter and other supporting visa application documents in their hand luggage, to show that they are still a fully registered student and plan to extend their Tier 4 visa once inside the UK.

If you will be going home and applying for a new visa while overseas, please remember to pop into the International Office with your new visa when you return so that we can update your immigration record.

Travel safety

If you will be travelling during the vacation period please take extra care of your passport, visa and other belongings. Losing your passport or visa whilst travelling in a foreign country can be extremely problematic and in most cases you will need to apply for a new visa before you can return to the UK, which can be both time consuming and expensive. We suggest that you always carry photocopies of your immigration documents and take time to familiarise yourself with the information on our website: www.warwick.ac.uk/go/international/immigration/travelling

Graduation

In order to enter the UK using your Tier 4 visa you must still meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules for student visas. Students whose courses have ended and who do not intend to join another programme when they return to the UK will have difficulties showing that they still meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules for students.

We would recommend that if you are leaving the UK and will be returning for the sole purpose of attending your graduation ceremony, you obtain a General Visitor Visa in order to avoid any risk of being refused entry to the UK.

The Immigration Service team wish you a safe and happy holiday season and look forward to seeing you in 2015.

Warwick life

If you have already completed the Autumn 2014 Student Barometer survey, thank you if not, please take a few minutes to complete the online survey and be in with a chance to win £1000 or one of five £100 Amazon vouchers. You can now read about the results from the Summer 2014 survey at www.warwick.ac.uk/go/international/students/sb and see what we are doing to improve the things you told us you were less satisfied with. To complete the survey please see the personalised link that was emailed to you on November 10th. You can complete the survey up until Friday 5th December.