



Welcome to the UK

Studying and living in the United Kingdom

2007-08

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**Studying and living
in the United Kingdom
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Welcome

Studying overseas is a life-changing adventure, full of challenge but also deeply rewarding. I am delighted that you have decided to come to the UK – where we have a long tradition of giving a warm welcome to international students. The quality of our education system is recognised as world class and support for international students is second to none. We all benefit from your stay in our country. You will acquire unique skills, knowledge and, most importantly, friends for life and our society will be enriched by your presence.

Preparing for this adventure is crucial and will ensure that you settle quickly into both our way of life and your studies. I hope this book provides you with a useful and exciting foretaste of life here and that it helps you prepare for the challenging and rewarding times ahead.

I send you a warm welcome to the UK and every good wish for your studies here.

Martin Davidson CMG
Chief Executive, British Council

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British Council

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Our purpose is to build mutually beneficial relationships between people in the UK and other countries and to increase appreciation of the UK's creative ideas and achievements.

Everything we do contributes to one or more of the following outcomes:

- improved perceptions of the UK in other countries
- greater mutual understanding between the UK and other countries
- stronger ties between the UK and other countries.

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Preparing to come to the UK

So, you are going to move to the UK to study for a while. What do you have to do to make it happen? Where do you begin? How do you make sure you do not forget anything? It is not difficult, but it does require planning and organisation.

Here is what you need to think about.

In this chapter:

- 1.1 **Countdown to departure**
– a summary of what to do and when to do it
- 1.2 **Preparing to enter the UK** – do not leave immigration issues to the last minute
- 1.3 **Arranging accommodation** – make sure you will have somewhere to stay when you arrive
- 1.4 **Money** – how much, how to get it, and how to transfer it to the UK
- 1.5 **Booking travel** – plan your journey and arrive at the best possible time
- 1.6 **Insurance** – how to protect yourself and your belongings
- 1.7 **Packing** – what to bring, how to carry it, and what to leave behind
- 1.8 **Further reading**





1.1 Countdown to departure

Here is a guide to planning your UK experience. Mark these dates on your calendar to make sure you keep on track. You should also check with your local British Council office. Many organise pre-departure briefings for students planning to study in the UK. These are an ideal opportunity to hear about life in the UK and ask about issues that most interest you.

What to do	When to do it	Why and how
Start applying for postgraduate programmes	At least 18 months before you want to start the programme	See chapter 11, section 11.6
Start applying for scholarships	12 to 15 months before departure	See section 1.4 in this chapter and chapter 6, section 6.3
Estimate your study and living expenses and start working out how to pay for them	At least one year before departure	See chapter 6, sections 6.1 and 6.2
Apply for undergraduate courses through UCAS	10 to 12 months before the course start date	See chapter 11, section 11.5
Start arranging accommodation in the UK	As soon as you have accepted a place on a course	See section 1.3 in this chapter and chapter 4
Ask your college or university about your options for paying your fees	As soon as you have accepted a place on a course	See chapter 6, sections 6.1 and 6.3
Check your passport and, if you are going to need a new one, start making enquiries	As soon as possible but at least six months before departure. Processing times vary from country to country	See chapter 2, section 2.1 and section 1.2 in this chapter
Check how to apply for entry clearance to the UK with the nearest British Diplomatic Post or visit www.ukvisas.gov.uk	As soon as possible but ideally at least six months before departure. Processing times vary from country to country	See chapter 2, section 2.1
Ask your home bank about transferring money to the UK and setting up a bank account here	Several months before departure	See section 1.4 in this chapter and chapter 6, section 6.5
Book your flight or other travel to the UK	As soon as possible, in order to get the best rates, but at least four to eight weeks before departure	See section 1.5 in this chapter



What to do	When to do it	Why and how
Check with your airline or shipping agent to find out what your baggage allowance is	When you book your flight or other travel to the UK	See section 1.7 in this chapter
Plan your onward travel from the airport or seaport to your final destination in the UK	When you book your flight or other travel to the UK	See section 1.5 in this chapter, chapter 3, section 3.3, and chapter 5
Buy travel insurance	When you book your flight or other travel to the UK	See section 1.6 in this chapter
Make sure you have received a letter of unconditional acceptance from your college or university	As early as possible to allow sufficient time to obtain entry clearance if required	—
Find out whether you will be entitled to NHS health treatment. If not, arrange health insurance	About one month before departure	See section 1.6 in this chapter and chapter 7
Find out how many goods you are allowed to bring into the UK and which items are prohibited	About one month before departure	See section 1.7 in this chapter
Find out whether your home insurance policy will cover your belongings while they are in the UK	About one month before departure	See section 1.6 in this chapter
If you are taking any prescribed drugs or medicines, ask your doctor to write a letter explaining what they are and why you are taking them	Two to four weeks before departure	—
Buy sterling and travellers' cheques to cover your first few weeks in the UK	Watch the exchange rates and pick a good time – but do not leave it too late (check deadlines with your bank)	See section 1.4 in this chapter
Request a reference letter from your bank in your own country – as this will help you to open a bank account in the UK	Two weeks before departure	See section 6.5



What to do	When to do it	Why and how
Start gathering all the items and documents you are taking with you – make sure you have got everything before you start packing	Two to three weeks before departure	See section 1.7 in this chapter.
Buy any extra items you need, e.g. money belt, suitcase with wheels, clothes, photos of yourself, and extra photos for student travel cards, etc., dictionary	Two weeks before departure	See section 1.7 in this chapter.
Label all your luggage with your name and address in the UK	When you finish packing	—

Ensure that all important documents are in your hand baggage (plus essential overnight items in case your luggage gets lost).

1.2 Preparing to enter the UK

You need to make sure you have a valid passport before you travel to the UK (or a valid national identity card if you are an EEA national). In some countries it may take several months to obtain a passport, so do not leave this to the last minute.

However, a valid passport is just the beginning. As chapter 2 (*Entry clearance requirements*) explains, you may also need to arrange ‘entry clearance’ – permission to enter the UK – in advance. To do that, you will need to prove that you have enough money to pay for your course fees, accommodation and living expenses. And to prove that you have enough money, you will need to have decided how you will pay for your course. If you are hoping for a scholarship, you will have to start applying for one up to a year or so in advance (see section 1.4). So as you can see, there is no time to lose. Visit www.ukvisas.gov.uk and read the immigration chapter in this book (chapter 2), then follow the guidelines carefully.

1.3 Arranging accommodation

It is important to arrange accommodation in advance. You have three possible choices:

- apply for a place in university/college accommodation
- arrange private accommodation
- book temporary accommodation.



Most universities and colleges have single room accommodation, which is not suitable for families. Some institutions may have a small number of family flats. If you plan to bring your family and your institution is not able to provide family accommodation, you should arrive first and then bring your family to the UK when you have found somewhere suitable for you all to live.

University/college accommodation

Universities and many colleges own and run their own accommodation for their students. Choosing this option is the easiest way to arrange your accommodation in advance. Your university or college sends you information and an application form (after you accept a place on a course). You fill out the application form and send it back, making sure you meet the deadline they give you. Once your application is accepted, they send you confirmation of your booking. A deposit may be required to secure your place in university/college accommodation and must be paid by the deadline given.

Private accommodation

This is usually difficult to secure before your arrival in the UK and is often best arranged when you can view the property in person. However, it may be useful to research the type, cost and availability of private accommodation in the UK by search the internet using keywords, e.g. 'accommodation + student + London'.

Other ways of researching private accommodation include:

- asking any friends or relatives you may have in the UK to look for advertisements in the local newspapers and follow them up on your behalf
- contacting the accommodation office at your university or college, as they usually keep lists of private accommodation available in the area
- contacting the students' union at your institution (they often also keep lists of accommodation)
- contacting a local accommodation agency in the UK
- contacting your country's Embassy or High Commission in the UK for information and advice.

Temporary accommodation

At the very least, you should arrange some temporary accommodation – you will need somewhere to stay for your first few days while you look for something more permanent. Here are your options:

- Contact the accommodation office at your college or university. Some institutions, but not all, rent out rooms in their halls of residence on a temporary basis, before the start of the term – if you plan to arrive early, ask about this option. The accommodation office may also be able to make suggestions about other forms of temporary accommodation, or may even be able to make a booking for you.



- Contact one of the student hostels listed in the Appendix at the back of this book. You may need to send a deposit to confirm your booking. Some hostels have long waiting lists, so apply as early as you can.
- Contact the British Council Hotel Reservation Service: telephone 0800 783 6695 (24-hour Freephone from within the UK) or +44 (0)20 7828 1506 (from overseas), fax +44 (0)20 7828 2881, e-mail hotels@britishcouncil.org
- Contact VisitBritain, which can provide lists of hotels, guest houses or bed-and-breakfast places and should also be able to book a room for you. Check the phone book for the office in your country, look at www.visitbritain.com, or contact the UK office: VisitBritain, Thames Tower, Black's Road, London W6 9EL, telephone +44 (0)20 8846 9000, fax +44 (0)20 8563 0302 (written and telephone enquiries only).
- If you plan to stay in Scotland, contact Visit Scotland, Ocean Point One, 94 Ocean Drive, Leith, Edinburgh, Scotland EH6 6JH, telephone +44 (0)845 2255 121 or +44 (0)131 332 2433, www.visitscotland.com
- If you plan to stay in Wales, contact the Wales Tourist Board, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff CF24 0UY, telephone +44 (0)8701 211 251, www.visitwales.com
- If you plan to stay in Northern Ireland, contact the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, St Anne's Court, 59 North Street, Belfast, BT1 1NB, telephone + 44 (0)28 9023 1221, fax + 44 (0)28 9024 0960, www.discovernorthernireland.com
- If you want to stay in the London area, contact Visit London, 6th Floor, 2 More London Riverside, London SE1 2RR, telephone +44 (0)20 7234 5800 telephone for recorded information +44 (0)870 1566366, fax +44 (0)20 7378 6525, www.visitlondon.com

Further information

Before deciding on any of these forms of accommodation, see chapter 4 (*Accommodation*) for further details. It is also sensible to check when arranging accommodation what will be provided in terms of bed linen and/or kitchen equipment.

1.4 Money

To obtain entry clearance (see chapter 2 – *Entry clearance requirements*), you will need to prove that you have enough money to cover your tuition fees and accommodation costs AND your living expenses. It is almost impossible to get extra funds and grants once you are in the UK, so you need to arrange all your funding ahead of time.

Start by working out how much money you will need. Turn to chapter 6 (*Financial and legal matters*) for help with this – see sections 6.1 and 6.2.

If you are hoping for a scholarship to help pay for your studies, then plan to start making enquiries and applications at least a year in advance. The chances of finding a bursary/scholarship or major funding after arrival are minimal so it is



essential to apply before you leave home. To find out what scholarships are available, first turn to chapter 6, section 6.3, for an overview. Next, contact your local British Council office or the ministry/department of education in your own country for further information. Finally, some colleges and universities offer their own scholarships for international students – if you have not received any relevant details, ask your institution.

Currency transfer: moving your money to the UK

It is risky to carry large amounts of cash when you're travelling. When the time comes to travel to the UK, plan to take just enough cash to meet your immediate needs (see the next section, 'The first few weeks') and send the rest of your funds by another method, such as:

- **International money order.** You buy this at home before you leave, and then when you get here you can either pay it directly into your UK bank account or take it to a post office to obtain cash. To exchange it for cash, the money order must be in sterling (British currency), and you will need to show your passport as identification. These money orders can be made payable to your UK institution and used to pay tuition fees. Any additional money for your living expenses should be on a separate money order or bank draft.
- **Bank draft.** This is similar to an international money order, except that you can only pay it into a bank account; you cannot exchange it for cash. Ask to have it made out to you in sterling and drawn on a British bank. That way you will not pay a commission fee when you pay it into your account, and the funds will take less time to clear (move through the system and into your account).
- **Electronic transfer.** Your bank in your home country transfers funds from your home account directly to your account in the UK. This is often the easiest way to transfer money, but it cannot be arranged until you have opened a bank account in the UK.
- **Telegraphic transfer.** This is the fastest way to send money overseas, but it is also the most expensive. As with an electronic transfer, you can only arrange a telegraphic transfer after you have opened your UK bank account – it cannot be arranged in advance.

There is no limit to the amount of money you can bring into the UK, but your government may control the flow of money in and out of your own country. In that case, you'll need to find out as soon as possible:

- how to get permission to transfer money
- whether there is a limit to how much you can transfer
- what regulations you must comply with.

Further information

Contact your local bank for advice on how to transfer your funds to the UK.



The first few weeks

When you first get to the UK, you will have lots of things to do and it may be a few days before you are able to approach a bank and open a bank account. In some parts of the UK it can take several weeks to open a bank account and once you do, it may take a while for your transferred funds to clear through the banking system. So altogether, it could be anywhere from ten days to six weeks before you have access to the funds you transfer. Obviously, you will need some other sources of money in the meantime. The possibilities include:

- **Sterling cash.** As mentioned earlier, you should not carry large amounts of cash, but do bring about £200 to cover the costs of your first few days. If your dependants are travelling with you, you will need to bring more cash.
- **Other currencies.** Most airports and seaports in the UK have a 24-hour bank or bureau de change where you can change overseas currency or travellers' cheques no matter what time you arrive. In Scotland at Glasgow, Prestwick or Edinburgh airports, though, you might have trouble exchanging money after 9.00 p.m. – keep this in mind when booking your flight and planning your cash needs. You can also exchange money at banks throughout the UK. Most are open from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Monday to Friday and some are open on Saturday mornings from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. If you arrive outside those hours, or at the weekend, plan either to exchange your money at the airport/seaport, or to bring enough sterling to cover your needs until the banks open.
- **Travellers' cheques.** These are safer than carrying cash, as they are insured against loss or theft. They can be cashed at banks and bureaux de change and travellers' cheques made out in sterling can also be used like cash in many shops and restaurants – but check with the staff in each case to be sure. If carrying travellers' cheques, keep them in a safe place, separate from your passport.
- **Credit cards** are widely accepted as payment in the UK, and you can also use them to get cash from the machines at banks (see section 6.5 for further information). Check with your bank at home to find out how much commission you will be charged if you use your home credit card in the UK.

1.5 Booking travel

If you are studying in London or the South-East the major airports serving this area are Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton. However, if you are studying elsewhere you will find it more convenient to travel to the nearest regional airport to your university. There are over 28 regional airports offering direct international services and/or connecting services over European gateways such as Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels or Frankfurt.

If there is no direct flight to your destination and you have to change planes, try to avoid using London Heathrow as a transit point. Heathrow Airport is very complex for transit passengers and is particularly challenging for first-time travellers. For ease of connection and greater access to the smaller regional airports in the UK, it is recommended that a European gateway airport is used whenever practical.



If you are arriving from outside the European Economic Area (EEA), you should allow at least four hours between flights, as you will need to go through immigration control at Heathrow.

If you are travelling to the North, and it is impossible to book a flight to the nearest regional airport, consider using Manchester as a gateway. Manchester is very well served by direct intercontinental flights as well as a high density of European connecting flights. This will substantially reduce the length and cost of northbound onward travel.

Before buying your travel tickets, check if your institution is organising a welcome programme or induction session and try to ensure that you can attend. Decide your preferred date of travel and ask your travel agent to work out the best route, taking into account any special deals on cost. Booking well in advance and being prepared to be flexible with your dates will often save you money.

When arranging your travel to the UK, think about what time you would like to arrive. There are a number of things you may want to do in your first few hours here:

- You will need to get from the airport or seaport to your destination – or at least to your temporary accommodation. Check with your institution whether they run an airport pick-up/arrival service that you will be able to use.
- You may need to speak to someone at your college or university about any number of things – how to get there, where to collect your keys, how to get into your accommodation, who to speak to when you arrive, etc.
- You may want to do some banking.
- You may need to go to a shop and pick up a few essential items.

The best time to do these things is on a weekday (Monday to Friday) during business hours (9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.). Outside these hours, most banks and many offices, shops and other facilities are closed. Trains, coaches and buses are less frequent on Sundays and public holidays, and in the evenings. So try to arrange your travel so that you arrive on a weekday morning: that way you will have plenty of time to reach your destination and settle in. See chapter 5 (*Transport*) and the UK map on page 174 to help you plan your arrival.

1.6 Insurance

There are three types of insurance to think about ahead of time:

- **Travel insurance** – to cover you and your luggage during your journey. Ask about this when you book your ticket to travel to the UK; your travel agent should be able to sell you a policy. Some banks also offer travel insurance policies; ask at your home bank when you arrange your currency transfer or exchange.
- **Personal belongings insurance** – to cover valuable items such as jewellery, musical instruments, cameras or your CD-player while they are with you in the UK. If these items are covered by an insurance policy at your home, check



whether they will still be insured while they are out of the country. If not, you should arrange insurance for them once you get to the UK (see chapter 6 – *Financial and legal matters* – section 6.7).

- **Health insurance** – to cover you against the cost of sickness or injury while you are in the UK. Find out whether you will be covered by the UK's National Health Service (see chapter 7 – *Health*). If not, take out a medical insurance policy before you leave home and check the excess clauses as some policies may mean you are liable for the first £50 or £100 of any claim.

1.7 Packing

STOP! Before you pack up all your belongings, consider the following:

- Find out what you are and are NOT allowed to bring into the UK, e.g. food items. Contact the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate in your country, or write to HM Customs and Excise, Portcullis House, 21 Cowbridge Road, East Cardiff, South Glamorgan CF11 9SR in the UK, or telephone the National Advice Service on 0845 0109000 or +44 (0)20 8929 0152 (their website at www.hmce.gov.uk contains information for travellers).
- Find out what your baggage allowance is. Most airlines allow 20kg of checked luggage but some offer 23kg or calculate your allowance on the piece system and will allow you two pieces. Most airlines also have size or weight restrictions for carry-on (hand) luggage and these can vary. If you exceed the checked luggage allowance, you will have to pay a surcharge based on every kilo of additional weight and this can be very expensive.
- Before packing electrical equipment, make sure it's compatible with UK standards: 240 volts, 50 cycles (50Hz), three-pin (square-pin) plugs. You may need an adaptor and perhaps a voltage converter – or you may prefer to buy UK-compliant items when you get here (see chapter 6, section 6.2, for typical prices).
- If you want to bring computer or audio equipment, you should also bring a receipt showing when and where it was bought. British customs officials may ask you to certify that the equipment is for your own use and that you are not importing it permanently.

What to pack and where to pack it

Carry on your person or in your hand luggage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● your valid passport, with visa or entry clearance if relevant● your travel tickets● money – cash, travellers' cheques, credit card – preferably in a money belt or a very secure inside pocket● vaccination certificates if required● X-ray report if required● any prescribed drugs or medicines you are taking, plus a letter from your doctor explaining what they are
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What to pack and where to pack it (continued)

<p>Carry on your person or in your hand luggage <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● original letter of acceptance from your institution● original documentary proof that you have enough money to pay your fees and meet your living costs (e.g. recent bank statements, proof of scholarship, sponsor's letter, reference letter from your bank in your own country)● originals (or certified true copies) of any degree certificates or technical qualifications● a pen or pencil and some paper, in case you need to write down directions, telephone numbers, etc.● confirmation of any accommodation you have booked, including full address and telephone number● address and telephone number of your final destination (if different)● details of your arrangements for onward travel within the UK● insurance documents● a list of what you packed in each item of your main luggage, in case you need to make an insurance claim● a warm sweater● an umbrella● any particularly fragile or valuable items● current driving licence if you are considering driving in the UK in the future. (See chapter 5, section 5.6)● name and telephone number of international students' adviser at your institution in case of an emergency and any out-of-hours emergency contact telephone numbers.
<p>Pack in your main luggage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● a photocopy of each page of your passport, including its number and the date and place of issue and any entry clearances● a note of the serial numbers of your travellers' cheques● back-up photocopies of all essential documents● at least nine passport-size photos of yourself – you will need them for student identification cards, bus/rail passes and various other purposes● clothing – mostly comfortable and informal but do also bring some smart clothes for special occasions● toiletries and personal items to last a week or so● towels and/or bed linen, if your accommodation doesn't provide them, but remember that these are bulky and heavy to bring in your baggage● a notebook, pen and pencil to use in the first few days● a bilingual dictionary if English is not your first language● a few small photos of family and close friends● one or two SMALL souvenirs to keep you feeling connected to home.



What not to pack

DO NOT bring:

- any prohibited items (e.g. weapons, certain drugs, certain foods and plants) – find out exactly what you can and cannot bring into the UK by contacting the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate in your country, or writing to HM Customs and Excise, Portcullis House, 21 Cowbridge Road, East Cardiff, South Glamorgan CF11 9SR in the UK, or telephone the National Advice Service on +44 (0)845 010 9000 or +44 (0)2920 501 261 outside the UK. www.hmrc.gov.uk
- too much clothing, especially if you're coming from a very different climate – you will have a better chance of finding the clothes you need once you get here (see chapter 9 – *UK factfile* – about climate)
- lots of food – this is heavy and most of the ingredients you will need are available in the UK
- lots of books – it may be cheaper to buy them once you get here, and you may not need to buy all the books on your reading list anyway
- lots of stationery (paper, pens, pencils, etc.) – you can buy all that when you get here, so just bring one or two things to get you through the first few days
- so many things that you exceed your baggage allowance – the surcharges will be expensive and you will be exhausted trying to carry it all.

Remember that you will have to carry your luggage with you from the airport to your final destination. This may mean changing your means of transport several times and it will be easier if your suitcase has wheels, and you do not have too many pieces of luggage to look after.

1.8 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *Accommodation for international students; Preparing for study in the UK; Keeping healthy* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, Telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922. The Guidance Notes for students can be downloaded from www.ukcosa.org.uk advice for international students.



Entry clearance requirements

The UK has long welcomed international students, and following recent government initiatives, that welcome has become even warmer: visa procedures have been reviewed with the view to providing a fairer, faster and firmer entry clearance process. But you still need to get the right documents and follow the regulations, so read this chapter carefully.

In this chapter:

- 2.1 **Entry requirements** – how to enter the UK as a student
- 2.2 **Your responsibilities in the UK** – two rules you should follow while you are here
- 2.3 **Extending your leave to remain in the UK** – what to do if you want to stay a little longer
- 2.4 **Students and employment** – when and how you can earn money
- 2.5 **Further reading**





2.1 Entry requirements

Every year thousands of international students choose to study in the UK because of the opportunities it offers. As in most countries, the authorities in the UK are careful about who comes into the country and many international visitors need to get permission, in advance, to enter the UK. Over recent years, the government has streamlined the visa process to make it more user-friendly for student applicants.

European Economic Area and Swiss nationals:

If you are a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country or a Swiss national, you do not need entry clearance to enter the UK. You are free to enter the country to work or study and the guidance below, on entering the UK, does not apply to you. If you need any advice, contact your local British Council office (contact details for all British Council offices are listed at www.britishcouncil.org/where/index.htm).

The countries of the EEA are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are in the EEA, but are not members of the European Union. Switzerland is not in the EEA, but an international treaty means that from 1 June 2002 Swiss nationals have a similar right to live in the UK as EEA nationals.

Nationals of all other countries:

If you want to stay in the UK for more than six months, then you must* obtain 'entry clearance' from the British Mission (Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General) in your own country before you travel to the UK.

If you want to stay in the UK for six months or less, check whether you are a 'visa national'. If you are a 'visa national', then you must obtain 'entry clearance' from the British Mission (Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General) in your own country before you travel to the UK, even if you want to stay in the UK for six months or less. The UK government decides the list of countries whose citizens are 'visa nationals'. Your nearest British Council office or British Mission will be able to tell you whether or not your country is a 'visa national' country. You can also check on the internet by going to www.ukvisas.gov.uk and selecting 'Do I need a UK visa?'

If you are not a 'visa national' and you want to stay in the UK for six months or less, you can choose whether or not to obtain entry clearance from the British Mission (Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General) in your own country before you travel to the UK.

If you are a stateless person or if you hold non-national documents (because, for example, you are a refugee in a country outside the UK), then you must obtain entry clearance before you travel to the UK. This applies even if you want to stay for six months or less.

*The only exceptions are British nationals (overseas), British overseas territories citizens, British overseas citizens, British protected persons and British subjects. For these groups, entry clearance is not compulsory, but in most cases is advisable (see why on the next page).



The advantages of entry clearance

If you have read the information above and can see that it is not compulsory for you to obtain entry clearance, you need to make a choice about whether or not to apply for it. In lots of cases it is advisable to apply for entry clearance, even though it is not compulsory.

The advantages of having entry clearance are: you may be able to get permission to stay for the full length of your course; you will usually clear immigration control at the airport in the UK quickly (this is particularly helpful if you are travelling with children); if there is a problem at immigration control in the UK, you will be allowed to appeal from within the UK; if you are studying a short course you will be able to check before travelling that you have been given an entry clearance sticker that allows you to work part-time; if you change your mind at a later date about how long you want to study in the UK, you will be able to ask the Border and Immigration Agency in the UK to allow you to stay longer (if you do not have entry clearance, you will not be allowed to do this, unless the course is at degree level or above. Instead, you will be expected to return to your home country to apply for entry clearance. This restriction applies even to British nationals (overseas), British overseas territories citizens, British overseas citizens, British protected persons and British subjects. Applications to the Border and Immigration Agency cost at least £295).

If despite all these advantages you decide not to apply for entry clearance, you can travel to the UK and seek permission to enter from the immigration officer at the airport. The immigration officer will decide whether you meet the immigration requirements for students (see below). The immigration officer can only give you permission to enter for a maximum of six months.

Applying for entry clearance

Note: The information in this chapter was correct at the time of writing, but changes are anticipated during the lifetime of this publication. It is IMPORTANT that you check with www.ukvisas.gov.uk or contact your local British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General in case any details have changed.

To obtain entry clearance, you must apply at the British Mission (Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General) in the country in which you live. The British Mission will give you a form to fill in and information about the documents you need to provide.

There is a charge for the application. You must satisfy the Entry Clearance Officer (ECO) at the British Mission that you meet the immigration requirements for students (see below). The ECO will then issue you entry clearance in the form of a sticker in your passport. The entry clearance should normally be valid for the whole length of your course. When you arrive in the UK, the Immigration Officer at the port of entry (e.g. Heathrow or Gatwick airports) will usually put a date stamp in your passport to show when you entered the UK. Your permission to be in the UK expires on the date indicated on the entry clearance.



The forms you will need

To get an entry clearance first contact your local British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General and ask for form VAF1 and a list of the documents that you need to provide. Alternatively download this form and the information from www.ukvisas.gov.uk

Read the British Council guidance note *First steps – preparing for entry clearance*, which can be downloaded from www.educationuk.org under 'Living in the UK' and 'UK immigration procedures'.

Complete the forms carefully then submit them to your local British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General along with the documents they have asked for.

They will include the following:

- your passport
- a recent passport-sized photograph of yourself
- the appropriate fee paid in local currency
- documents showing that you meet the entry requirements (see below).

The requirements for student entry clearance

Citizens of non-EEA countries need permission to enter the UK. Under the UK immigration system this permission is called 'leave to enter'. The requirements to be met by a person seeking permission to enter the United Kingdom as a student are that he or she:

- 1 has been accepted for a course of study which is to be provided by an organisation which is included on the UK's Department for Education and Skills' Register of Education and Training Providers
- 2 has been accepted for a course of study at:
 - (a) a publicly funded institution of further or higher education
 - or
 - (b) a bona fide private education institution which maintains satisfactory records of enrolment and attendance
 - or
 - (c) an independent fee-paying school outside the maintained sector
 - and
- 3 is able and intends to follow either:
 - (a) a recognised full-time degree course at a publicly funded institution of further or higher education
 - or
 - (b) a weekday full-time course involving attendance at a single institution for a minimum of 15 hours' organised daytime study per week of a single subject or directly related subjects
 - or
 - (c) a full-time course at an independent fee-paying school



- and
- 4 if under the age of 16 years, is enrolled at an independent fee-paying school on a full-time course of studies that meets the requirements of the Education Act 1944

and

 - 5 intends to leave the United Kingdom at the end of his or her studies (except degree students who hope to stay on to work when they finish studies, provided they are not sponsored by their government or an international scholarship agency)

and

 - 6 does not intend to engage in business or take up employment in the UK, except part-time or vacation work undertaken with the consent of the Secretary of State for Employment

and

 - 7 is able to meet the costs of his or her course and accommodation, and the maintenance of him/herself and any dependants without taking employment or engaging in business or having recourse to public funds.

Health care students: Regulations for student nurses and postgraduate doctors and dentists and trainee general practitioners are slightly different. Ask for details from your local British Council office or from the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General in your home country.

Register of Education and Training Providers: If your institution is a publicly funded institution of further or higher education, you can assume that it appears on the Register. If your institution is not a publicly funded institution of further or higher education, you should check the following website to see whether it appears: www.dfes.gov.uk/providersregister (click on 'Browse the Register' in the left margin).

Private education institutions: If you will be attending a private college or school, the Entry Clearance Officer (ECO) may want to know that it is a 'bona fide' institution. A bona fide institution is one that can prove that it meets the requirements of the Immigration Rules, by keeping satisfactory records of enrolment and attendance. If a college or school is accredited by the British Accreditation Council (BAC), the British Council (including members of ARELS and BASELT), the Association of British Language Schools (ABLS) or the Independent Schools Council (ISC) it should be recognised as bona fide. If a college or school is not accredited by one of these organisations, it may still be bona fide. However, the immigration authorities may ask for extra information about the school or college, to ensure that it is genuine.

The documents you need

You should make sure that you have the following documents and information before you apply for entry clearance or travel to the UK:



A letter of acceptance on the course (except for prospective students)

This will be a letter from your institution confirming that you have been accepted on a full-time course (of at least 15 hours' daytime weekday study per week) or a full-time course leading to a degree. The letter should state the course title, how long the course will last (start and end dates) and confirm that you have met the entry requirements for the course and have been assessed as academically able to follow it. It should also indicate which examination(s) you will take, any qualifications you may earn and confirmation, including the cost, of any accommodation provided.

Evidence that you can pay the course fees and support yourself and your family (if applicable)

This could include evidence of government sponsorship, a letter from a sponsor confirming that they can support you, together with evidence that they can do this and/or your own bank statements. Check with your local British Mission how many bank statements they require.

You should also provide a letter from your institution stating the full cost of the course, acceptable arrangements for payment and whether you have already paid the fees or a deposit.

Accommodation: Although immigration rules do not require unaccompanied students to show that accommodation has been arranged, your place of study may have given you information about its availability or may be arranging accommodation for you. You might want to show this to the ECO. You should also have evidence that you can pay for your accommodation – your local British Mission will be able to tell you what documentation you need.

Where to apply

Take or post the form VAF1 and all accompanying fees and documents to the address that the British Mission gave you (in some countries, this will be the office of a courier company). Issuing times vary from immediate to anything up to several weeks (or months, in certain places), so check the likely processing times with your local British Mission. Do not send money through the post, instead use a postal/ money order or a bank draft, payable to the British Mission, checking first whether they will accept this form of payment. Note also that in certain countries it is probably not a good idea to send your passport through the post.

Online visa applications

An online visa application facility is now available in a growing number of countries. See www.ukvisas.gov.uk and check the online application country list, which you will find on the application form, and guidance page, to see whether this applies to you.

Applicants in the USA, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia can also apply online on the following websites: www.britainusa.com (USA), www.britishconsulate.org.hk (Hong Kong), www.britain.org.nz (New Zealand), www.britaus.net (Australia).



The interview

You may be asked to attend an interview as part of your entry clearance application process. This is to give you the opportunity to clarify certain parts of your application with the ECO. The ECO will need to be satisfied that your study plans are genuine and realistic.

Your level of English

If you are taking a course which requires English language skills, the ECO may ask you to demonstrate your level of English at the interview (a good IELTS score may be sufficient). If you do not wish to conduct the interview in English you should explain why and give information on any language training you intend to take. Do not try to conduct the interview in English if it means you will not understand the questions or will not be able to express yourself fully.

Preparing for your interview

Be familiar with all your study plans – why you chose the particular institution and course, how the course will help your future career, and how it links with any previous study or courses you have followed in your country and with any future study or employment plans. For example, you should say clearly what link any preparatory English classes will have with any subsequent study.

- Make sure you know which examination(s) you are planning to take and what hours you will be studying.
- If you are paying fees by instalments, you need to be able to explain how much they will be and how often they are due.
- Be clear about the cost of living, the course fees and your finances. Can you prove that you have enough money to complete the course?
- Be as clear as you can about your future career – what are you going to do when you return?

You should answer all questions carefully and honestly. If you are not sure of an answer, then say so. Do not invent a reply which may prove to be incorrect. Try to remain calm and think about your reply before giving it. Remember that over 90 per cent of student entry clearance applications are successful. In some countries, a medical examination or fingerprinting may be required and this may increase the amount of time your application takes to be processed. Ask the British Mission in your country whether this is the case. It is important to note that some long-term students may be required to have a medical examination on entry.

Prospective students

If you have not yet finalised your study arrangements and you want to come to the UK as a prospective (intending) student before enrolling on a specific course, explain this intention to the ECO who may give you entry clearance as a prospective student if you can show that you meet all of the requirements above (except for acceptance on to a specific course) AND that you intend to enrol on a



course within six months AND that, if you do not find a course, you plan to leave the UK when your permission to remain ends.

You will need to show that you have a genuine and realistic intention of finding a place on a course, for example, by showing letters inviting you to an interview or to visit a college. You will be given permission to enter for six months. Then, once you have enrolled on a course, you will need to extend your leave to remain as a student. You cannot work in the UK while you are here as a prospective student.

Changing status

If you are not a visa national, and you do not obtain a student or prospective student entry clearance before you travel to the UK, you will not be allowed to extend your stay in order to study a course that is below degree level (note that there may be special arrangements if you arrived before 1 October 2004).

If you are a visa national, make sure you apply for entry clearance as a student rather than a visitor. Visa-national visitors are not allowed to extend their stay as students when they finish a visit, so make sure you apply for the right kind of entry clearance in the first place.

If you need to travel to the UK to finalise arrangements for your studies, you may be able to apply for an entry clearance as a 'prospective student' (see above). Visa-national prospective students can apply to extend their stay in the UK as students but have to pay a fee to the Border and Immigration Agency to do this (£295 for an application by post, and £500 for an application in person).

Spouse/civil partner and children

You will usually be allowed to bring your husband, wife or civil partner and any children under 18 years of age to the UK, as long as you can show that you can financially support and accommodate them. You will also need to show the ECO your marriage or civil partnership certificate and a birth certificate for each child. It is advisable for them to apply for entry clearance, even if they are not visa nationals. They will normally be given permission to stay in the UK for the same period as you. Your husband, wife or civil partner and children will be allowed to work if your permission to be in the UK lasts for 12 months or more. Make sure they have a copy of your passport with them if they apply after you – the ECO will need to see the page showing your name, your entry clearance sticker (if you have one) and how long your permission lasts. If your permission to be in the UK lasts for less than 12 months, your husband, wife or civil partner and children will not be allowed to work.

Leaving and returning to the UK

If your permission to stay in the UK has been given for more than six months, you will usually be able to travel in and out of the UK (as long as you return before your permission expires, and your studies are continuing). Ask a welfare officer at your institution for advice about being re-admitted to the UK before you plan any trip



abroad. It is especially important to seek advice if your permission to stay was given for six months or less, or you will be returning to the UK after your permission to stay expires, or when you will no longer be studying (even if your permission to stay will not have expired).

If you have problems

If the ECO is not satisfied with the evidence you have provided or if entry clearance has actually been refused, contact your institution as soon as possible. If you cannot do this, for instance if the institution is closed for the holidays, contact UKCOSA. Once entry clearance has been issued, you should be refused entry into the UK only if the immigration officer decides there has been a change in your circumstances, or that you gave false information or did not disclose important facts when you applied for entry clearance or that your purpose in arriving is different from the purpose specified in the entry clearance. You should therefore carry all relevant documents in your hand luggage, whether or not you have entry clearance.

EEA and Swiss nationals

If you are an EEA national (see the beginning of this chapter) or a Swiss national and you have been accepted on a course at a UK college or university, you have the right to live in the UK for the duration of your course. This right (called 'right of residence') also applies to your spouse and any dependent children, and certain other relatives in the case of Swiss nationals. (If they are not EEA or Swiss nationals and they are going to live with you in the UK for six months or more, they should apply for an EEA family permit at their nearest British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate-General.) If you wish, you can apply to the Home Office for a residence permit. It is not compulsory, but it can be useful as evidence of your right of residence in the UK. The permit usually covers the duration of the course. As an EEA or Swiss student you are free to work or be self-employed in the UK (though if you are a national of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia or Slovenia, you will need to check whether you need to apply to register under the Worker Registration Scheme).

2.2 Your responsibilities in the UK

Registration with the police

Your entry clearance, or the stamp that the immigration officer gives you when you arrive in the UK, will state whether or not you have to register with the police. EEA and Swiss nationals and Commonwealth citizens do not have to register. Your entry clearance or stamp will probably tell you to register with the police if:



1 you are aged 16 or over and are either from one of the countries listed below, or are a stateless person, or are travelling on a non-national travel document (rather than a passport):

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Peru, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen and

2 you intend to stay in the UK for more than six months as a student.

If your entry clearance or stamp tells you to register, your spouse, civil partner or child is likely to be given an entry clearance or stamp that tells them to register too.

If you do need to register (check the stamp in your passport), you must do so within seven days of your arrival in the UK. Go to your local police station and take your passport, two passport-sized photographs of yourself (unless you are registering in London) and the registration fee (currently £34).

If you are studying in London, go to the Overseas Visitors Records Office instead of the police station: Overseas Visitors Records Office, 180 Borough High Street, Borough, London SE1 1LH (open 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday, although the doors can shut as early as 2.30 p.m. during the busy autumn period), telephone: +44 (0)20 7230 1208 (recorded information).

Each time you change your address and whenever you extend your permission to be in the UK (see section 2.3), you must renew your police registration. There is no charge for renewal unless you have lost your original registration document.

Welfare benefits

To enter the UK as a student from outside the EEA, you must be able to support yourself and any dependants without claiming the following welfare benefits (which are called 'public funds'):

- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit
- Council housing (but if you live in 'hard to let' council housing through arrangements made between your college or university and the local authority, this does not count as public funds)
- Council Tax Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Housing as a homeless person
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- State Pension Credit
- Working Families Tax Credit
- Social Fund payment.

If you apply for any of these funds, you are likely to endanger your future immigration status in the UK, so talk to the student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university before making any enquiries. If you are a national of an EEA country or Switzerland, you are allowed to claim public funds, although you may have to meet certain residence and other conditions to qualify for some of the benefits.

Further information

For more detailed information on your rights and responsibilities (e.g. access to benefits, state schooling, employment), contact one of the following:

- a student adviser at your institution or your students' union
 - your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** (see your local telephone directory, or www.nacab.org.uk)
 - **UKCOSA: The Council for International Education**, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX (telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922), www.ukcosa.org.uk
-

2.3 Extending your leave to remain in the UK

(If you're a national of an EEA country or Switzerland, this section does not apply to you.)

Take note of the date that your entry clearance is valid until, or the date that your 'leave to enter' or 'leave to remain' in the UK will run out. This is the date when your current permission to be in the UK will expire. By this date you should either leave the UK or apply to extend your permission to be here. Not everyone is allowed to extend their permission to be here (see the paragraph on page 27 headed 'Changing status' to make sure it is open to you).

As a part of the Prime Minister's Initiative to attract more international students to the UK, many international students are now given permission to be in the UK for the full period of study. Students on courses of 12 months or more that end during the summer will usually be given permission to be in the UK until 31 October. Students on courses that do not follow the usual autumn to summer pattern will usually be given a period that includes two months at the end of the course, for packing up and making arrangements to leave.

However, some students are not given permission to be here for the whole of their course at the very beginning. If this has happened to you, you will have to apply for an extension of your permission to be here. Start preparing for the application at least two months before your permission runs out.



How to apply

To apply to stay longer in the UK, you must pay a fee of £295 or £500 (see below) and take or send certain documents to the Home Office. They must be the originals and not photocopies.

Which documents:

- your completed application form FLR(S) – see below
- your unexpired passport or travel document and corresponding documents for each dependant, if they are applying to extend their stay in the UK with you (and your old passport as well, if you showed that when you entered the UK)
- if your passport shows that you are required to register with the police, your Police Registration Certificate and Certificates for each dependant, if they are applying to extend their stay in the UK with you
- a letter from your college or university stating that you are still enrolled on a full-time course of study, or that you will be beginning another one (with details of the course, what qualification it leads to, and its start and end dates)
- if your last period of permission was as a student, documentary proof that you have attended and made good progress in your studies (e.g. exam results or qualification certificates showing your enrolment and attendance during your course, or a letter from your college or university)
- bank statements covering the past three months, or other evidence that you have enough money to continue to pay your fees and maintain yourself and any dependants
- if you expect to earn some of the money from a job at your college or university, or from a sandwich-course placement, a letter from your college or university confirming the details of the arrangement
- if a relative or friend is sponsoring you, a letter from that person confirming the agreement, plus formal documents showing that the person has enough money to support you (e.g. bank statements for the past three months)
- if you are being sponsored by a government, an international scholarship agency or your college or university, a letter from them confirming that they are continuing to sponsor you, indicating how much funding they will be providing, or confirming that they agree to you continuing to study (the original letter, not a photocopy)
- two recent passport-sized photographs of yourself and similar photos of your dependants aged 16 or over, if they are applying to extend their stay in the UK with you (write the name of the person shown on the back of each photograph).

Make sure you give the Home Office the original documents, not photocopies. FLR(S) stands for Further Leave to Remain (Student). To get this form, you can:

- download it from the Home Office website at www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk
- ask at your college or university
- contact the Application Forms Unit on 0870 241 0645 at the Home Office Border and Immigration Agency (BIA).



Contact one of the Home Office's regional Public Enquiry Offices (PEOs) (listed under 'Further information' on page 32). When you are preparing to fill out the form, it is a good idea to read UKCOSA's Guidance Note, *I want more time in the UK, as a student. What do I do about immigration?* (see under 'Further information' for how to get a copy). You could also ask a student adviser or welfare officer at your institution for help.

Where and how to make your application:

- If you are sending your application by post, send your documents to the address given on the front of the form (as at April 2007, this was: Leave to Remain – FLR(S), Border and Immigration Agency, PO Box 495, Durham DH99 1WR). Telephone for general enquiries 0870 606 7766, for Application Forms Unit 0870 241 0645.

If you send your documents by post, send them by special or recorded delivery (see chapter 8 – *Services and facilities* – section 8.9) and keep the receipt, as well as a photocopy of everything you send. The Border and Immigration Agency aims to deal with most postal applications within 20 working days and at most within 70 working days.

The fee for making a postal application is £295. You must pay by cheque (personal or business), postal order, debit card or credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Delta, Solo, Electron, Switch, or Maestro card only; note that Maestro cards are not acceptable unless they were issued in the UK).

- If you are making your application in person, you can go to a Public Enquiry Office in Croydon, Birmingham, Glasgow or Liverpool. It is compulsory to book an appointment in advance for all offices apart from Croydon (where an appointment is optional). They may be able to deal with your application on the day if you have all the right documents and it is straightforward. If you are not sure whether a Public Enquiry Office will be able to deal with your application on the day, call the appropriate office with details of your nationality, type and level of course and any other matters which you think might affect your application. The fee for making an application in person is £500. You must pay by cheque (with cheque guarantee card), banker's draft, postal order, debit card or credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Delta, Solo, Electron, Switch or Maestro card only; note that Maestro cards are not acceptable unless they were issued in the UK). If you are using someone else's card to pay for the application, the card holder must come with you to sign for the payment.

Application deadline: Even if you do not have all these documents available, you must still make sure that you apply before your current permission to be in the UK expires. Enclose as many of the documents as you have and include a letter explaining what is missing, why it is missing and when you will be able to send it to the Home Office. You will then have made your application in time. If you send documents at a later date, you should send them to: Initial Consideration Unit – FLR(S), Border and Immigration Agency, Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 2BY. You must provide the following details in your covering letter: your full name; date of birth; nationality; the recorded or special delivery number



if you used such postage; the date on which you made your application (by post or in person); your Home Office reference if you have one.

If your permission to be in the UK has already expired, contact one of the following for help with your application:

- a student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university
- your university or college students' union
- the Immigration Advisory Service (see below)
- UKCOSA: The Council for International Education (see below).

Further information

Immigration Advisory Service, County House, 190 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YB, telephone +44 (0)20 7967 1200 (24-hour emergency line +44 (0)20 7378 9191), fax +44 (0)20 7403 5875, www.iasuk.org

Border and Immigration Agency, Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 2BY. Telephone for general enquiries 0870 606 7766, for Application Forms Unit 0870 241 0645, www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

Regional Public Enquiry Offices:

Birmingham: Immigration Office, Dominion Court, 41 Station Road, Solihull, Birmingham B91 3RT, telephone +44 (0)121 704 5450

Glasgow: Immigration Office, Festival Court, 200 Brand Street, Govan, Glasgow G51 1DH, telephone +44 (0)141 555 1258

Liverpool: Immigration Office, Reliance House, 20 Water Street, Liverpool L2 8XU, telephone +44 (0)151 237 0405

UKCOSA, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX (telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922) www.ukcosa.org.uk. The UKCOSA Guidance Note, *I want more time in the UK, as a student. What do I do about immigration?* gives advice on how to complete the FLR(S) form.

If you do have to make a late application, and the application is refused, you cannot appeal against that decision (see 'Refusals and appeals' below).

Refusals and appeals

If your application is refused, you will receive a letter from the Home Office telling you why. The letter will also tell you whether or not you have the right to appeal against the decision. If you made your original application in good time – before your current leave to remain had expired – then you should automatically be given the right to appeal.

If you have the right to appeal, you will only have a few days in which to exercise this right. You should therefore ask one of the following for professional advice about the appeal process as soon as possible:

- a Citizens Advice Bureau
- a law centre
- a student adviser or welfare officer at your college or university
- your university or college students' union
- the Immigration Advisory Service (see 'Further information' above)
- UKCOSA: The Council for International Education (see 'Further information' above).

2.4 Students and employment

There are many opportunities for international students to earn extra money in the UK, both during and after their studies.

Special rules for students make it possible for you to work while you study. The opportunities available include part-time or vacation work, as well as sandwich course placements. You may even be able to apply to stay on longer in the UK at the end of your course for training or work experience, or under a new scheme introduced by the government for graduates in certain physical sciences, maths and engineering courses. European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss nationals are free to work in the UK (though if you are a national of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia or Slovenia, you will need to check whether you need to apply to register under the Worker Registration Scheme).

The countries of the EEA are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

All other students need to follow the rules explained below.

Following the rules

Before you look for a job in the UK, you need to check that your passport stamp or sticker allows you to work. Speak to your institution or see the UKCOSA guidance note, *Working in the UK during your studies* (available from www.ukcosa.org.uk) for more information.

Students with the appropriate passport stamp/sticker are allowed to work under the following conditions:

- you cannot run your own business, be self-employed, provide services as a professional sports person or entertainer, or pursue a career by taking a permanent, full-time position
- money that you hope to make while doing part-time or vacation work cannot form part of your immigration application. You must show that you can meet the cost of studying and living in the UK without employment or financial assistance from the state
- during term-time you will only be allowed to work for a maximum of 20 hours a week.



Working and studying

You can find out which part-time jobs are available by consulting notice boards around your institution, looking in local newspapers and job centres, and visiting your college or university careers office. Many institutions now have their own 'job shop' which displays part-time and holiday vacancies and sometimes issues job vacancy bulletins.

The careers service can also provide you with extensive information and advice about employment, training and further study (including possibilities after graduation, work permits and work experience possibilities) and practical help with job-hunting and making applications.

When considering part-time jobs you should think carefully about how much time you will have available. Achieving your qualification and success on your course will be your priority while you are studying in the UK. Your studies may be intensive and demanding and you should be realistic about the amount of time this will leave for part-time and holiday work.

UK careers after graduation

Some students may be able to stay on in the UK to work after their courses.

Work permits are usually issued where a job requires a skill that is in short supply.

You should get advice if you are thinking of applying to stay on in the UK for work permit employment.

The UK government has also introduced a Highly Skilled Migrant Programme that is designed to allow very highly qualified and experienced people to stay in the UK to work.

The UK government's policies on employment for people from overseas changes frequently. You can check for news on the 'work permits' section of the Border and Immigration Agency website www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

Work experience after your studies

After graduation, there may be opportunities to work with leading national and international corporations in the UK and Europe, the USA or, indeed, any part of the globe. At the end of your course, you may be able to stay and work in the UK through the Training and Work Experience Scheme (TWES). Under this scheme, your employer must apply for your work permit, and you will have to do one of the following:

- undertake training leading to a recognised professional or specialist qualification (e.g. accountancy)
- follow a graduate training programme leading to international employment opportunities
- join a work experience scheme where you gain up to 12 months' work experience with a UK employer.



Graduates in physical sciences, maths and engineering

Under this scheme students who have obtained degrees in certain specific subjects within these fields are able to apply for permission to stay in the UK for a year to work and gain experience. To find out more about the scheme check with your institution, UKCOSA or on the IND website www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk (click on 'Schemes and Programmes').

Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme

This scheme enables international students who have successfully completed an HND, degree course, Master's or PhD at a Scottish further or higher education institution to apply to stay in Scotland for up to two years after completing their studies in order to work.

To find out more about the scheme, check with your institution or look at the government's website – www.workingintheuk.gov.uk

National Insurance and tax

If you work in the UK under any of the arrangements mentioned in this section, you'll have to pay UK taxes and National Insurance (NI) contributions, as British workers do. It is your responsibility to apply for an NI number once you start work: telephone your local Benefits Agency office and arrange to go and complete an application form there (look up Benefits Agency in your telephone directory). It may take up to 12 weeks before you receive your NI number, but you can start work without it.

2.5 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *Dependants of international students; EEA students; I want more time in the UK, as a student. What do I do about immigration?; I am coming to the UK to start my studies. What do I need to do about immigration?; Working during your studies; Working in the UK after your studies; Welfare benefits and international students* (available on the UKCOSA website www.ukcosa.org.uk, or you can obtain paper copies from your local British Council office, or UKCOSA, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922)

British Council: *First Steps – preparing for entry clearance*. This is available from all British Council offices worldwide.

- Education UK www.educationuk.org
- Border and Immigration Agency (including work permits) www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk
- UK Visas www.ukvisas.gov.uk
- Working in the UK www.workingintheuk.gov.uk



Arriving in the UK



You have made all your preparations, you have bought your ticket to the UK and you are ready to go. What can you expect when you step off the plane or boat?

Here is a guide to getting through the terminal building, reaching your final destination, and sailing through your first 24 hours.

In this chapter:

- 3.1 **Immigration control** – the routine procedures that everyone has to go through
- 3.2 **Customs control** – the routine procedures your luggage has to go through
- 3.3 **Onward travel** – how to get from the airport to your final destination
- 3.4 **Short-term accommodation** – if you cannot move into permanent accommodation yet, here is what to do
- 3.5 **Playing it safe on arrival** – steps you can take to minimise mishaps
- 3.6 **Personal safety**
- 3.7 **Further reading**



3.1 Immigration control

Whether you arrive by air or by sea, when you get to the UK your first step is to pass through immigration control. The UK offers a warm welcome to international students. But, as in all countries, the authorities have to ensure that everyone who enters the UK has a legitimate reason to be here.

Here's a step-by-step guide to the process.

1 When you enter the terminal building, follow the signs for 'Arrivals'. These signs will lead you to the passport control area. (If you are transferring to another flight at the same airport, follow the signs for 'Flight Connections' instead. Then, at your final airport, follow the signs for 'Arrivals'.)

2 As you approach passport control, you will see electronic screens indicating where you should queue. There will be two types of queue: one for travellers with British or EEA (European Economic Area) passports, and another for all other passport-holders. Make sure you join the correct queue, or you could waste a lot of time.

3 At some major airports, arriving passengers are also sorted by flight number as they enter the immigration control area, so you should have this number to hand. You can find your flight number on your boarding card and ticket stub. You will also need to know your flight number later in order to collect your baggage, so do keep this information with you even after you leave the plane.

4 When you reach the front of the queue, the immigration officer at the desk will want to see that your documents are in order, so make sure you have them ready. In particular you should have ready your letter of acceptance from your place of study and evidence of your funding, such as a sponsor's letter or bank statements. The immigration officer will check that you have an up-to-date passport and, if required, a valid visa or entry clearance. If you are not sure whether you require entry clearance, see chapter 2 for more information. You should also be prepared to answer some questions about yourself, including where you will be staying and what you intend to do during your time in the UK.

5 You may be asked to undergo a brief, routine health check by the airport doctor, which might include an X-ray. The health check will take place in a separate room. Afterwards, you will need to return to immigration control.

6 If you did not have to obtain entry clearance before you left your home country, the immigration officer will put a stamp in your passport showing how long you are allowed to stay and any special conditions, such as registering with the police. If you obtained entry clearance (a visa or entry certificate) before you left your home country, the immigration officer will put a stamp in your passport showing the date you entered the UK. The conditions of your stay will already be printed on your entry clearance.

As long as your documents are in order, you should pass through immigration smoothly. But if you find you need help for any reason, there are two things you can do:



- ask the immigration officer to telephone your college or university (keep the number readily available)
or
- ask to speak to a representative of the Immigration Advisory Service. The Service has offices in a number of UK cities, and can also be reached on the following telephone numbers:

Immigration Advisory Service

England

London

+44 (0)20 8814 1115

Manchester

+44 (0)161 834 9942

Wales

+44 (0)2920 496662

Scotland and Northern Ireland

+44 (0)141 248 2956

www.iasuk.org

3.2 **Customs control**

If you have arrived by air, your next step is to move on to the baggage reclaim area. Collect your luggage from the carousel that has your flight number on it.

If you cannot find your luggage ask a member of airport staff for assistance.

Once you have collected your luggage, you must pass through customs control. You should have a choice of three different channels:

- Choose the blue channel if you are travelling direct from an airport within the EU where you have already cleared your luggage through customs. When you enter the UK from another EU country, no taxes or duties apply to your goods.
- Choose the green channel if you are travelling from outside the EU and have nothing to declare. Customs officials may still stop you and ask you to open your luggage for inspection if they wish, or they may allow you to pass straight through.
- Choose the red channel if you are travelling from outside the EU and you have goods to declare. You have goods to declare if you are carrying more duty-free or tax-free goods than you are allowed to bring, or if you are carrying any prohibited goods. (Find out in advance what your allowance is and which goods or food items are prohibited: check with your local British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate before you leave home. You can also check the travel information section on the HM Customs and Excise site www.hmrc.gov.uk) When you go through the red channel, a customs official will ask you what you have to declare. He or she will probably also ask you to open your luggage so he or she can see what you are bringing into the UK. You will not be allowed to bring in any prohibited goods. If you are carrying more duty-free goods than you are allowed, you will be able to bring them in but you will have to pay duty on them before you can proceed. So if you choose to bring in more goods than your duty-free allowance, do make sure you have a credit card or enough extra cash with you to pay the duty.



3.3 Onward travel

Where to arrive in the UK

If you are studying in London or the South-East, you will probably arrive in the UK at one of the three major London airports: Gatwick, Heathrow or Stansted.

If you are studying elsewhere in the UK, ask your travel agent to check for flights to the nearest airport. There are 28 international regional airports throughout the UK, most of which have excellent connections through Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt or London. There are also increasing numbers of flights direct to the larger non-London airports such as Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

It is a good idea to avoid changing flights at London Heathrow if you can find an alternative route. To change flights at Heathrow you usually have to change terminals, which can be very confusing unless you know the airport well. If you do have to change terminals at Heathrow, allow plenty of time – at least two hours.

Advice about onward travel

The easiest way to travel from your arrival airport (or seaport) to your final destination is to get clear directions in advance and then follow them carefully. If you arrange your onward travel with your travel agent when you book your flight, your agent should be able to give you instructions for the next stage of your journey. And if the British Council has arranged your visit, your local British Council office should provide similar advice. See chapter 5 (*Transport*) for more information.

If you are arranging your onward travel independently, contact your college or university and ask about the best way to get there from your point of arrival in the UK. VisitBritain should also be able to provide you with travel information if you contact them well ahead of time.

Further information

VisitBritain, Thames Tower, Black's Road, London W6 9EL, telephone +44 (0)20 8846 9000, fax +44 (0)20 8563 0302 (written and telephone enquiries only), www.visitbritain.com

Northern Ireland Tourist Board, St Anne's Court, 59 North Street, Belfast BT1 1NB, telephone + 44 (0)28 9023 1221, fax + 44 (0)28 9024 0960, www.nitb.com

Visit Scotland, Ocean Point One, 94 Ocean Drive, Leith, Edinburgh, Scotland EH6 6JH, telephone +44 (0)845 2255 121 or +44 (0)131 332 2433, www.visitscotland.com

Wales Tourist Board, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff CF24 0UY, telephone +44 (0)8701 211 251, www.visitwales.com

enjoyEngland, 1 Regent Street, London SW1Y 4XT, telephone +44 (0)20 7808 3801, www.enjoyengland.com



Some colleges and universities send a staff member to meet new international students at an airport or local train station. If your college or university offers this service it will normally need to be booked in advance, and they should send you details in an information pack. If you have not received any information from your institution contact them and ask for it.

Finally, if you arrive at the airport or seaport and you are simply not sure where to go next, find the general information desk. The staff at the desk should be able to advise you about how to reach your destination.

Typical travel options

If you arrive in the UK at one of the London airports, your main onward travel options will be as follows:

Onward travel from London airports:

- **Gatwick** – If you are travelling from Gatwick to anywhere other than London, try to avoid going into central London: it is often possible to take a bus, coach or train direct from Gatwick to your destination. If you do have to go into central London, the easiest way to get there is to take the Gatwick Express or the slower but cheaper Southern train to Victoria Station, or the Thameslink to King's Cross.
- **Heathrow** – If you are travelling from Heathrow to somewhere other than London, try to avoid going into central London: the network of direct bus and coach services from Heathrow serves many UK destinations. You can also take a bus from Heathrow to connect with rail services from Reading and Woking if necessary. If you do have to go into central London, you can get there either by London Underground,* or by Heathrow Express train to Paddington Station, or by bus to King's Cross Station.
- **Stansted** – If you are travelling from Stansted to somewhere other than London, try to avoid going into central London: take a bus, coach or train from Stansted to your destination. If you do have to go into central London, the easiest way is to take the Stansted Express train to Liverpool Street Station.

Travel from London by rail: There are six major rail stations in London, and a number of smaller ones. Each station serves a different part of the UK, so you will have to work out which station you need. Fares depend on when you travel and how far in advance you book your ticket (see pages 60 to 62).

Travel from London by coach: Most coaches leave from Victoria Coach Station, about ten minutes' walk from Victoria (rail) Station. Fares are usually cheaper than for rail services, but journeys by coach take longer.

*Note: The Heathrow Terminal 4 underground station is closed for long-term refurbishment. Replacement bus services are available from/to Hatton Cross station or the Heathrow Express is available from Terminal 4 as normal. The underground from Terminals 1, 2, 3 operates as normal.



Further information

For details of London rail stations, the London Underground, and rail and coach services throughout the UK, see chapter 5 (*Transport*).

Useful websites:

www.nationalrail.co.uk	for information on railway timetables
www.nationalexpress.com	for information on travelling by coach
www.baa.com	for airport information for London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London Stansted, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Southampton
www.lbia.co.uk	for Leeds Bradford Airport information
www.bhx.co.uk	for Birmingham Airport information
www.manchesterairport.co.uk	for Manchester Airport information
www.cial.co.uk	for Cardiff Airport information

3.4 Short-term accommodation

When you first get to the UK, you may want to stop over for a night or two near the airport or in London before going on to your destination. Your options will include hotels, guesthouses and simpler bed-and-breakfast establishments.

To save yourself any last-minute difficulties, arrange your short-term accommodation in advance. There are several ways to do this – see chapter 1, section 1.3. If you can't make a booking in advance, you should be able to find help at the information desk of the airport or seaport where you arrive.

As a rough guide, you can expect to pay about £70 per night (including breakfast) in a medium-price London hotel and £50 per night in a guesthouse. But these are very rough estimates; rates vary widely according to the season, the area, and the degree of luxury. Ask about specific rates when you make your booking.

If you arrive at a major coach or train station in London, people offering cheap accommodation may approach you. It is safer NOT to accept any such offer. Go instead to an official hotel reservation desk or to the general information desk.

3.5 Playing it safe on arrival

In the excitement of arriving in a new country, it can be easy to become distracted and misplace things, especially as you get on and off trains, planes, coaches, etc. Here are some tips for avoiding mishaps:

1 Take special care of your passport, travel documents and tickets. Keep them with you in a safe place or in your handbag and know where they are at all times. Before you travel take a photocopy of all the pages of your passport that show your details (name, photograph, passport number and its date and place of issue)



and all the pages that have any entry clearances or immigration stamps on them, and pack this separately from your passport. If you do lose your passport, contact the police and your Embassy immediately and give them your passport details.

- 2** Do not carry large amounts of cash with you; bring just enough for your immediate needs (at least £200). Bring a credit card, if you have one, to pay for things like rail tickets and hotel bills. If possible, your cash should include some coins and some small bank notes (£5 or £10) so that you can use public telephones and ticket machines if necessary.
- 3** Carry cash, credit cards and travellers' cheques in a safe place, such as an inside pocket, a money belt or a zipped handbag. Make a note of the serial numbers of your travellers' cheques, and pack this separately from the cheques themselves. Keep your travellers' cheques separate from your passport. If you lose your travellers' cheques or credit card, report the loss to the police and the issuing organisation immediately.
- 4** Keep the telephone number of your college or university handy, in case you need to call for advice or to tell them about a change in your plans.
- 5** Bring as few valuable items as possible with you; leave expensive jewellery at home. Pack your valuable items in your hand luggage, not your main luggage.
- 6** Label your luggage clearly so that it can be forwarded to you if it gets separated from you during the journey. If you do lose your luggage at any stage, report the loss immediately to officials of the airline or shipping line. At airports or seaports, check the 'lost property office' to see whether it has been handed in there.
- 7** Keep your luggage with you at all times. If you need to leave your luggage somewhere while you change money or make telephone calls, find an official 'left luggage' office (available at airports and at major rail and coach stations). For a small fee, you will be able to leave your luggage in a supervised area. The attendant should give you a receipt so that you can collect your items later.
- 8** Always use a licensed taxi. At Heathrow there are the famous 'black cabs' and at other airports the Information Desk will tell you the name of the reputable companies who are permitted to work there. Never go with someone who approaches you inside the terminal building unless you have made a specific arrangement to be met by a 'minicab' company.

3.6 Personal safety

By international standards, the UK is a safe country, with low levels of violence and street crime. However, as a visitor you need to be aware of the types of situations that may put you at risk and what you can do to avoid them. Should you have the misfortune to be involved in any incident involving theft or personal attack, report it as soon as possible to the police. The police have a duty to protect all citizens and can be safely approached. Also, you will need a certificate from the police if you need to claim for theft on an insurance policy.



In an emergency you can contact the emergency services: fire, police or ambulance, by dialling 999 from any telephone. This call is free of charge but should be used only in an emergency. Non-emergency calls to the police should be made to your local police station using the local telephone number in the telephone directory.

In buildings

- Make sure you know the location of and – where appropriate – how to use fire exits, fire-assembly points, fire-fighting equipment and first-aid facilities.
- Make sure you know the procedures for emergency evacuation and follow them as necessary.

At home

- Use safety chains or lock all outside doors when you are at home but leave the keys in the locks in case you need to get out in a hurry.
- If you live in a flat or a house with an outside light, use it.
- If you are female and live in a flat with a door-entry system do not put 'Miss', 'Mrs', etc. before your name, just use your surname. If in doubt about a visitor, do not let him or her in.
- If you have a telephone answering machine, do not say 'I am not available', as this indicates a single occupant. It is better to say 'No one is available to take your call'.
- Close and lock all windows and outside doors whenever you go out.
- When you go out on dark nights and mornings leave a table lamp or room light on to make the place look occupied.
- If you have gas appliances in your home, make sure that they are checked annually by a professional to safeguard against carbon monoxide poisoning. If you are unsure about the safety of your gas appliances, ask your landlord or landlady to have them checked and use a carbon monoxide detector, which can be bought in hardware shops and some petrol stations.
- Whenever you go out, turn off gas and electrical appliances, such as the cooker, television, iron, etc. (but not refrigerator).

Your belongings

- When you first arrive in the UK you need to be well prepared. When moving into new accommodation, don't leave luggage or belongings outside or in an open trunk/boot of a car or taxi.
- Use an ultraviolet pen to mark your valuables with your name and student ID number (see your Students' Union Office for details) to enable the police to return them if they are stolen.
- Ask your college if they provide safe storage or consider purchasing a small personal safe to keep your passport, traveller's cheques, wallet/purse and other valuables locked away.



- Make sure your television, video and other valuables can't be seen through a window and never leave cash or credit cards lying around.
- If you go away on holiday, leave your valuables in storage (many educational institutions have a secure storage room) or with a trusted friend.
- If you have a bicycle, always lock it up by its frame and wheel to a fixed object. Mark it with your postcode so the police can return it if it is stolen.
- Try not to use a computer case when carrying a laptop; use a less obvious bag to carry it in and think before using it and displaying other expensive items such as watches and jewellery in public places where they could be stolen.
- Don't leave your mobile phone unattended. If it is stolen, immobilise it by calling 08701 123123. You will need to have your IMEI number (15-digit serial number) when reporting a stolen mobile phone – this can be found by dialling *#06# on most mobiles or by looking behind the phone battery. You should keep a note of your IMEI number in a safe place in case it is required.

When using public transport

- If you travel by train, tram or Underground (tube), avoid sitting in an empty carriage. Instead, try to sit near groups of people in a well-lit area.
- When travelling a long way by train, make sure someone knows which train you are travelling on and when you are due to arrive.
- Try to avoid walking alone after getting off a bus or train. If you can, walk close to a group of people or arrange for someone to meet you.
- Check the time of the last train, bus or tram home to avoid being stranded.

In a car

- If you are going on a long journey, plan your route using main roads and telephone ahead to let someone know roughly when to expect you.
- Carry out pre-drive checks on fuel, oil and tyres. Tyre weld is useful in case of a flat tyre as it will mend the tyre for long enough for you to reach a garage.
- Always carry a good torch and check batteries regularly.
- Handbags or briefcases are safer placed on the floor or behind the seat. Never leave valuable items in the car; if you have to, lock them in the boot.
- If you do not have a mobile phone always carry enough change and/or a telephone card to make a telephone call.
- If you're travelling in a car alone you may feel safer locking the doors while driving.
- Current UK legislation requires the use of 'hands-free' mobile phones only while driving.

In a taxi

- Keep the number of a local licenced taxi/minicab firm handy – never use an unlicensed company.

- Be aware that some minicabs that stop in the street may be cheaper but are not licensed, and are therefore not as safe as taxis or minicabs that you arrange by telephone.
- Agree the fare before you get into the taxi in order to avoid confrontation at your journey's end.
- Always sit in the back.
- It is quite acceptable to chat with the driver, but do not give away any personal information.
- Have your cash ready and leave the cab before you pay the driver.

When walking or cycling

- Keep valuables in a safe place and do not carry large amounts of cash.
- Dress appropriately and make sure you (and your bicycle) are visible, especially after dark.
- Walk on the pavement, facing oncoming traffic. When crossing the road remember that vehicles drive on the left in the UK so will approach you from the right.
- Carry a torch after dark and do not take short cuts, for example, through dark alleyways.
- If you feel you are being followed, cross the street (more than once if necessary), and if you are still unhappy move as quickly as possible to a public area, such as a restaurant or bar, and telephone for help. It is not necessarily the best idea to use the first telephone that you see if it is in an isolated spot.
- To remain safe and alert don't listen to a personal stereo or have long conversations on a mobile phone while you are walking.

Further information

Further information is on the Home Office website www.good2bsecure.gov.uk or see *Safety First – a personal safety guide for international students* on the Education UK website www.educationuk.org (click on 'Living in the UK', then 'Health').

3.7 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *I am going to the UK to start my studies. What do I need to do about immigration?; Arriving in the UK* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922, www.ukcosa.org.uk)



Accommodation



Your living arrangements can be an important factor in your success as a student in the UK. When you live in comfortable accommodation that meets your needs, you are better able to study and relax properly and can make the most of your time here. Find out how to make this happen.

In this chapter:

- 4.1 **Arranging accommodation in advance** – do not wait until it is too late
- 4.2 **University or college accommodation** – why it is a good place to start
- 4.3 **Private accommodation** – choices, costs, pros and cons
- 4.4 **Tenancy agreements and other legalities** – what you need to know
- 4.5 **Further reading**



4.1 Arranging accommodation in advance

Take the initiative and sort out your accommodation as soon as you can. There are several types of accommodation to choose from, but there are also shortages in some areas, particularly London, so do not leave this until the last minute. As soon as you have accepted a place on a course, you should start to arrange accommodation through your institution's accommodation office (or 'student housing' office). Make sure you complete any accommodation forms and return them before the deadline date. At the very least, make sure you have temporary accommodation arranged before you leave home, so you have somewhere to stay when you first get to the UK (see chapter 1, section 1.3). Your first choice is between university or college accommodation and private accommodation.

4.2 University or college accommodation

Universities and many colleges own and run their own accommodation for their students. There are several types:

- halls of residence – large buildings for large numbers of students
- houses for small groups of students
- flats for married students or students with families.

Halls of residence are the most widely available type of accommodation. Some halls are single-sex (for male or female students only) and others are mixed. Universities and colleges usually only have a limited number of houses and flats, and so specific groups will have priority.

Average cost: About £90 to £150 per week single occupancy.

The cost of a one-bedroom flat in Central London can be anywhere from around £800 to upwards of £1,000 per month depending on location.

What you get: In a hall of residence you live in a study bedroom (either by yourself or with another student) and you can expect to have a bed, bed-linen, storage space for your clothing, a desk, a desk lamp, a chair, some bookshelves and an internet modem point. Your room might also include a shower and a telephone – but in most halls these are located outside the individual rooms and you share them with other students.

Some halls of residence provide meals (usually breakfast and an evening meal), but most accommodation is now 'self-catering' – which means that you buy and prepare your own food, usually sharing a kitchen with other students.

Advantages: Even if you think that you would eventually prefer private accommodation, it's a good idea to start out in university or college accommodation. It is a great way to get to know other students, you will be close to your study facilities, and it will give you time to get to know the local area before you start searching for other accommodation. It is also the easiest form of accommodation to arrange in advance.



Disadvantages: You might have to pay a term in advance. In addition, you might have to move out of university or college accommodation during the vacations. But do not worry: the accommodation office may be able to help you find alternative housing for the vacations, if you are staying in the UK. You may be committed to paying rent for the academic year, even if you want to move out before the end of that year.

How to apply: If your university or college has its own accommodation for students, the accommodation office should send you an information pack and an application form when you apply for your course or when you are offered a place. Most institutions give priority to applications from first-year students and international students. Follow the application procedure carefully and make sure you meet the deadline.

Home for the holidays: staying with a British family

Some international students choose to stay as a guest in the home of a British family during the vacations. There are two organisations in the UK that arrange this kind of short-term accommodation for international students:

Experiment in International Living, 287 Worcester Road, Malvern, Worcestershire WR14 1AB, telephone +44 (0)1684 562577, fax +44 (0)1684 562212, e-mail info@eiluk.org, www.experiment.org/programs.htm

HOST, 1 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS, telephone +44 (0)20 7254 3039 fax 0207 7923 1606, e-mail students@hostuk.org, www.hostuk.org

Checklist: what to ask about university/college accommodation

- What kinds are available? Halls? Houses? Flats? Is there anything suitable for your family (if they are coming with you)?
- Is the accommodation single-sex or mixed? Are both kinds available?
- How much does it cost?
- Does the cost include meals?
- Are there any other extra costs, such as telephone service, heating or electricity?
- What items will you need to provide yourself? Bed-linen? Towels? Certain kitchen utensils?
- Can you stay on in the accommodation during the vacations, or will you have to move out?
- What happens if you decide you want to move out before the end of the contract?



4.3 Private accommodation

Private accommodation may be owned and run by organisations (such as charities), by private companies or individuals (a landlord). There are several types available:

- student hostels
- lodgings
- bedsits
- flats and houses
- youth hostels.

Private accommodation is sometimes a little harder to arrange in advance, but the accommodation office at your college or university should be able to help. They may have lists of the rental accommodation available in the area, and they might even be able to make the arrangements for you.

Private accommodation varies widely in size and quality, so always arrange to view the accommodation in person before you decide whether or not to take it.

Student hostels

Hostels tend to be run by charitable organisations. Some are for nationals of specific countries, and others are open to students of all nationalities.

Average cost: About £55 per week.

What you get: Hostels generally provide rooms for single students but a few also provide rooms for married couples. Many hostels provide meals, and some provide cooking facilities so you can prepare your own food.

Advantages: As with university or college accommodation, staying in a hostel allows you to grow familiar with an area and decide where you would like to look for other accommodation.

Disadvantages: Furnishings and facilities may be of a lower standard than in some other types of accommodation.

How to apply: To book a place in a hostel, you need to apply direct to the hostel and pay a deposit. Hostels are not available everywhere, and some of them have long waiting lists, so apply as early as you can. (London hostel addresses and UK-wide contact addresses can be found in the Appendix at the back of this book.)

Lodgings

Living in 'lodgings' means that you rent a room in someone's home. The home could belong to anyone: a single person or a married couple; young people or older people; or a family with children.

Average cost: About £70 to £90 per week, depending on the location and the arrangement.

What you get: You have your own room to yourself, but you will probably have to share the bathroom. Your host may provide meals, or else you will have access to the kitchen to prepare your own.



Advantages: If you get along fairly well with your host(s), living in lodgings can be a very comfortable arrangement that provides you with some company and a source of social contact separate from your college or university friends.

Disadvantages: You need to adapt your lifestyle to the customs and routines of the household, so you have less independence than in some other types of accommodation.

How to find a place:

- Ask the accommodation office at your college or university for help and advice.
- Ask your country's Embassy or High Commission in the UK for information.
- If you are in the UK, check for advertisements in local newspapers, in shop windows and on notice boards. You can also advertise in these places yourself, saying what type of accommodation you are looking for and how much you can afford to pay.
- Contact an accommodation agency and ask them to look for accommodation for you. Many agencies charge fees for administration and preparing tenancy agreements. You should always find out first how much their help will cost, and whether you or the landlord will have to pay. It is illegal for an agency to insist that you pay fees before they have found acceptable accommodation for you. To find an agency, look in the local UK *Yellow Pages* telephone directory, or ask the accommodation office for suggestions.

Bedsits

The word 'bedsit' combines the ideas of 'bedroom' and 'sitting room'. Some large houses consist entirely of bedsits, which are rented out to couples or individuals. Other bedsits are located in someone's home.

Average cost: About £60 to £90 per week, depending on the location and the arrangement.

What you get: A single room containing living, sleeping and sometimes cooking facilities. If cooking facilities are included, they are likely to be fairly simple – for example, perhaps a small refrigerator, an electric kettle, and a microwave oven and/or a hotplate. You will normally have to sign a tenancy agreement with the landlord (see section 4.4), and may have to share some bills, or you might have an electricity or gas meter for your room only.

If cooking facilities are not included in the room, you will have to share a kitchen with the other residents of the house. You also share the bathroom, and you might have to share the telephone. You provide your own bed-linen and towels, do your own laundry, and keep your own room clean. You will also be expected to clean up after yourself when you use the kitchen.

Advantages: You have more independence in a bedsit than in lodgings.

Disadvantages: Some people find living in a bedsit lonely. You have less contact with other people than in many other forms of accommodation.



How to find a place:

- Ask the accommodation office at your college or university for help and advice.
- Ask your country's Embassy or High Commission in the UK for information.
- If you are in the UK, check for advertisements in local newspapers, in shop windows and on notice boards. You can also advertise in these places yourself, saying what type of accommodation you are looking for and how much you can afford to pay.
- Contact an accommodation agency and ask them to look for accommodation for you. Many agencies charge fees for administration and preparing tenancy agreements. You should always find out first how much their help will cost, and whether you or the landlord will have to pay. It is illegal for an agency to insist that you pay fees before they have found acceptable accommodation for you. To find an agency, look in the local UK Yellow Pages telephone directory, or ask the accommodation office for suggestions.

Flats and houses

This is a popular option for groups of two or more students who are willing to share costs.

Average cost: Varies hugely depending on size and location.

What you get: A self-contained, furnished flat or house, usually with living room, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom(s), and sometimes a dining room. Various sizes are available, from one and two-bedroom flats up to four- or five-bedroom houses. You will have a legal agreement with the landlord (a 'tenancy agreement' – see section 4.4) and you may have to pay an initial deposit as security, in case you break or damage anything. Depending on the arrangement, you and your friends may also need to pay the heating and electricity bills, and you will almost certainly have to pay the telephone bill. Most students in this type of arrangement also choose to share their food costs. You will have to do your own cleaning and provide your own bed-linen and towels.

Advantages: You and your friends will have lots of independence, and splitting your costs this way can sometimes be even cheaper than other types of accommodation.

Disadvantages: Sometimes it is hard to find a suitable flat or house near the college or university, so you may have to travel further to get to classes. You need to pick your living partner(s) carefully – if you fall out, the arrangement can become uncomfortable, and if one person leaves or gets behind with their rent the others could be liable to make up the difference.



How to find a place:

- Ask the accommodation office at your college or university for help and advice.
- Ask your country's Embassy or High Commission in the UK for information.
- If you are in the UK, check for advertisements in local newspapers, in shop windows and on notice boards. You can also advertise in these places yourself, saying what type of accommodation you are looking for and how much you can afford to pay.
- Contact an accommodation agency and ask them to look for accommodation for you. Many agencies charge fees for administration and preparing tenancy agreements. You should always find out first how much their help will cost, and whether you or the landlord will have to pay. It is illegal for an agency to insist that you pay fees before they have found acceptable accommodation for you. To find an agency, look in the local UK *Yellow Pages* telephone directory, or ask the accommodation office for suggestions.

Youth hostels

Youth hostels are used mainly by tourists on a tight budget.

Average cost: About £12 to £25 per night.

What you get: Fairly basic accommodation. You may have to share a room with several other people, and you will certainly have to share the bathroom. Some youth hostels provide meals, and others provide simple cooking facilities.

Advantages: Youth hostels can be a useful source of inexpensive short-term accommodation – for example, if you need a place to stay for the first few days while you look for more permanent accommodation.

Disadvantages: You will have less privacy than in other types of accommodation, and little or no quiet space for studying. Many youth hostels close during the day: you have to leave by a certain time in the morning, and you cannot get back in until late afternoon or early evening.

How to find a place:

Youth Hostels Association (YHA), Trevelyan House, Dimple Road, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3YH, telephone +44 (0)1629 592600, fax +44 (0)1629 592702, www.yha.org.uk

4.4 Tenancy agreements and other legalities

If you rent a flat or a house, or bedsit, you will have a 'tenancy agreement' or 'lease'. This is a written or verbal legal agreement between you (the tenant) and the property owner (the landlord). Verbal agreements are as binding as written ones, but it is a good idea to have someone with you as a witness when you make the agreement.



Tenancy agreements should normally contain information about the amount of rent, the length of the tenancy and what rights you and your landlord will have under the law. In most cases, you will have an 'assured shorthold tenancy' which means that your landlord cannot ask you to leave without a good reason during the first six months. Although these rights offer you some protection, it is still your responsibility to check the tenancy agreement thoroughly and make sure you agree with the terms.

Do not sign the tenancy agreement if you do not know what all of it means. If you do not fully understand your rights, show your tenancy agreement to an adviser in the accommodation office or student welfare office at your university or college and ask for help. You can also get help from a housing advice centre, law centre or Citizens Advice Bureau. When you do sign the tenancy agreement, make sure you get a copy to keep for yourself, in case you need to check any details later on.

The landlord may also ask you to sign an inventory: a list of all the items in the property (pieces of furniture, kitchen items, etc). If so, make sure you get a copy of this as well. Check that it is correct and that any existing damage to these items is included before signing it. If your landlord does not provide an inventory, you should make one yourself and send a copy to the landlord.

Payments

Before you move into private accommodation, you will probably be asked to pay a deposit equivalent to one month's rent. Make sure you get a receipt for any deposit or fees you have paid. When you leave the accommodation, if you have paid all your bills and caused no damage to the property, your full deposit will be paid back to you. If you are renting through an accommodation agency, you may also be asked to pay fees for preparing tenancy agreements and administration.

You should also keep a written record of all the rent payments that you make, as you make them. If you have a dispute with your landlord, or you get behind with your rent, you should get advice as soon as possible.

Security of tenure

Remember that if you live in the same building as your landlord, or you have a room in a student or youth hostel, or university/college accommodation, then this will affect how secure your tenancy will be.

If you do not share any living space with the landlord or a member of their family (apart from means of access like an entrance hall or a staircase) or are a student living in halls of residence (or any other type of accommodation where an educational institution is the landlord), you will have basic protection from eviction. Your landlord will have to end your tenancy first, either by waiting for the end of the fixed term you agreed for the tenancy or by giving you at least four weeks' written notice in writing to quit and getting a court order, before you have to leave.

If you share living space (e.g. a kitchen, living room or bathroom) with your landlord or are in a student or youth hostel, you will be what is termed an 'excluded tenant or licensee', which means that you are outside the protection of the UK law which



regulates tenancies and will not have security of tenure. All the landlord has to do to evict you is to give you notice, although they must give you a reasonable amount of time in which to leave.

Further information

If you have problems with accommodation, contact the accommodation office or students' union at your university or college. If you need specialist or legal help, contact your local housing aid centre, Shelterline (the 24-hour freephone helpline 0808 800 4444), e-mail info@shelter.org.uk, or your local Citizens Advice Bureau. There are more than 700 Citizens Advice Bureaux around the UK – a full listing can be found at www.nacab.org.uk (or check your local telephone directory). They will be able to tell you your rights as a tenant and the rights of your landlord.

Council Tax

Most adults in England, Scotland and Wales have to pay Council Tax based on the value of the property they live in, to cover the cost of local services such as the fire brigade, police and rubbish collection. (In Northern Ireland, a different local tax applies.) But many students do not have to pay the tax.

- If you live in halls of residence that are run by a college or university for the accommodation of students, you do not have to pay Council Tax.
- If you and everyone else who lives in the same property are all full-time students, you do not have to pay Council Tax.
- If you are a full-time student and:
 - you are living in the UK with your spouse or civil partner and children
 - your spouse or civil partner and children are NOT nationals of a country in the EEA (see chapter 2)
 - your spouse or civil partner and children have been admitted to the UK as your dependants and have a time limit on their stay (see chapter 2)
 - no other non-student is sharing your home

then you do not have to pay the tax, nor do your dependants.

Further information

The Council Tax rules are complex. To find out for certain whether or not you or your dependants will have to pay the tax, contact one of the following once you know where you will be living:

- for college or university accommodation, contact the accommodation office
- for private accommodation, contact the landlord to find out if they expect you to pay the Council Tax. It is a good idea to consult the accommodation office or student adviser for advice as well, or contact your local housing aid centre, Shelterline or Citizens Advice Bureau (see the local telephone directory, or www.nacab.org.uk).



Checklist: what to ask about private accommodation

- What does the rent cover? Meals, electricity, gas, hot water, use of telephone, television?
- If any of these things are not covered, roughly how much extra will you have to pay? Are there meters for the gas, electricity or telephone?
- Can the landlord increase the rent?
- Will you or your spouse have to pay Council Tax? (See previous page.)
- When must you pay the rent? Weekly? Monthly? The first day of the month? The last day of the month?
- How will you keep a record of what you have paid? Is there a rent book? Will the landlord give you receipts?
- If you have to pay an initial deposit, when will it be returned to you? What does the deposit cover, and in what circumstances will it not be returned? Your deposit should be no more than two months' rent. If the landlord asks for more, get advice (see 'Further information' below).
- Make sure you get a receipt for your initial deposit and any agency fees you have paid.
- How long is the tenancy agreement and how much will it cost to renew it?
- If you want to end the tenancy agreement, what terms and conditions affect your ability to do so?
- If you want to leave the accommodation, how much notice must you give the landlord?
- If the landlord wants you to leave, how much notice must he or she give you?
- Make sure you have your own copy of the tenancy agreement, signed and dated by the landlord.

4.5 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *Accommodation for international students; Council Tax and international students* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7288 4330, fax +44 (0)20 7288 4360, www.ukcosa.org.uk)



Transport



Travelling around the UK is easy. An extensive network of rail, coach and bus services covers both local and longer journeys, the roads are excellent, and even cyclists have their own network of routes. In the following pages, discover the many ways to get around the UK.

In this chapter:

- 5.1 **First steps** – how to travel from the London airports
- 5.2 **Travelling by train** – find out about fares, bookings and routes
- 5.3 **Catching a coach** – where to turn for all the details
- 5.4 **The London Underground** – getting to grips with 'the tube'
- 5.5 **Tips on taking taxis** – know the advantages and disadvantages
- 5.6 **Cars and motorcycles** – licence requirements and rules of the road
- 5.7 **Bicycle basics** – routes and recommendations
- 5.8 **Further reading**

5.1 First steps

Your first experience of the UK transport network will be on the day you arrive: you will need to get from the airport or seaport where you enter the UK to your final destination or your temporary accommodation. If you arrive at one of the main London airports, you have a choice of the following transport options.

Travel from the London airports

From	To central London	To other destinations in the UK
Gatwick Airport	<p>The easiest way is to take an overground train to Victoria main-line station.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Gatwick Express runs every 15 minutes non-stop to Victoria in about 30 minutes. Fare: approximately £14–£25.00, depending on the type of ticket purchased. ● Southern trains run direct to Victoria and London Bridge, and to Charing Cross via Waterloo East. Journey times are a little longer but the fares are cheaper than those of the Gatwick Express. 	<p>If possible, avoid travelling into central London. Take a bus, coach or train direct from Gatwick to your destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus and Coach Traveline: 0870 608 2608 (from within the UK only). www.traveline.org.uk <p>Frequent coaches to most cities and large towns, and to the other London airports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rail enquiries: 08457 484950 (from within the UK only). www.nationalrail.co.uk <p>Direct rail service to many large cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Brighton and Reading.</p>
Heathrow Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Heathrow Express (overground train) runs every 15 minutes and takes about 15 minutes to reach London Paddington Station. Fare: approximately £13.50–£26, depending on the type of ticket purchased. <p>Some airlines may offer complimentary or reduced-rate tickets – check with your travel agent when you book your flight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The London Underground trains run about every three to seven minutes, depending on the time of day, from 	<p>If possible, avoid travelling into central London. Take a bus or coach direct from Heathrow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus and Coach Traveline: 0870 608 2608 (from within the UK only). www.traveline.org.uk <p>Frequent coaches to most cities and large towns, and to the other London airports. There are also buses operating from Heathrow to Woking, Watford and Reading railway stations, from which trains run to the West, Midlands and North.</p>

* See note in chapter 3 *Arriving in the UK*, regarding the Underground services from Heathrow Terminal 4.



From	To central London	To other destinations in the UK
<p>Heathrow Airport (continued)</p>	<p>about 5.00 to 5.30 a.m. until about 12.00 to 12.30 midnight on Mondays to Saturdays, and from about 5.45 to 6.15 a.m. until about 11.30 to 12.00 midnight on Sundays. Journey time: about 45 minutes. Fare: approximately £4.00. If you are travelling over the weekend or after 9.30 a.m. you may find it cheaper to purchase a Travelcard for approximately £6.80, giving you unlimited travel on all London Underground and bus services that day – see section 5.4 for further details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus: the National Express Airport bus runs approximately every 10 minutes to Victoria coach station. Journey time about 60 minutes. Fare: single one-way approximately £10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rail enquiries: 08457 484950 (from within the UK only). www.nationalrail.co.uk <p>If you do decide to travel onwards by rail through London, check which London station your train departs from (see section 5.2). All London main-line stations can be reached by the London Underground from Heathrow (see section 5.4).</p>
<p>Stansted Airport</p>	<p>The Stansted Express runs every 15 minutes and takes about 40 minutes to reach Liverpool Street Station. Fare approximately £15–£25, depending on type of ticket purchased.</p>	<p>If possible, avoid travelling into central London. Take a bus, coach or train direct from Stansted to your destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bus and Coach Traveline: 0870 608 2608 (from within the UK only). www.traveline.org.uk <p>Frequent coaches to most cities and large towns, and to the other London airports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rail enquiries: 08457 484950 (from within the UK only). www.nationalrail.co.uk <p>Direct rail service to many large cities.</p>



5.2 Travelling by train

The network of train services in the UK is extensive and well used, ranging from local lines to fast intercity routes. ('Intercity' trains travel between major towns and cities.) On a very long journey, you can sometimes get a place in a 'sleeper' – a compartment where you can lie down and sleep. You can even take your car on some trains, using a service called Motorail.

Fares

Fares depend on when you travel, where you go, and how far in advance you book your ticket. The most expensive fares are for last-minute bookings travelling during weekday peak hours (mainly business commuting hours). Here is an overview.

- Standard open singles/returns and standard day singles/returns can be used at any time on the day shown on the ticket.
- Cheap day singles/returns are available in a few areas for certain local journeys but can only be used outside peak travel times.
- Saver singles/returns are discounted tickets that you can use on longer rail journeys, but outside peak travel times.
- Super Saver singles/returns are discounted tickets with more limitations on when you can use them than Savers (only on off-peak days).
- Network AwayBreaks can be used for certain journeys in London and South-East England, subject to restrictions on travelling in peak hours.
- SuperAdvance and Apex tickets have to be booked in advance and are available in limited numbers on selected journeys only.
- Season tickets are available for unlimited travel for a week or any period between one month and a year.
- Travelcards can cover all forms of transport in London. If you travel to London from another town, the Travelcard can combine your main journey with travel around London.
- Multi-modal tickets are available in some areas, which can be used to travel on other types of local public transport.
- Railcards (Young Person's, Senior, Family, Network and Disabled Person's) last a year and get you reductions on rail journeys outside peak travel hours. If you travel at or before 10.00 a.m. Monday to Friday, a minimum fare will apply.
- Rover/Ranger tickets give you unlimited travel in a specific area or throughout the UK for seven or 14 days.
- Train companies sometimes offer other special bargain tickets and discounts, but usually these will only be valid on the trains of the train company offering them.
- The BritRail Pass is available to those from overseas coming to the UK, allowing unlimited travel on the UK rail network for up to one month. Ask for details from your travel agent before leaving for the UK.



Ticket prices vary greatly depending on the time and day of travel. It is cheaper to travel off-peak, outside the rush hour during the week or at weekends. It is also cheaper to book three days in advance and cheaper still if you book seven days or a month in advance and are prepared to restrict your travel to a specific train. However, the cheapest tickets are always non-refundable and non-reroutable so beware of this if you know that your plans may change.

Here are some examples of the range of prices you can expect to pay for a single (one-way) weekday adult ticket booked in advance, depending on the type of ticket you have bought and the time you are travelling at:

London – Bristol	£29.00–£56.00
London – Edinburgh	£28.00–£110.00
London – Leeds	£20.00–£82.50
London – Manchester	£23.00–£101.00
London – Oxford	£16.90–£18.80 (no advance purchase)
London – Swansea	£38.00–£81.00

If you buy a Young Person's Railcard or a Student Coach Card, you are entitled to reduced fares on most journeys. For details, ask at your students' union office or any main railway or coach station, or go to the website at www.youngpersons-railcard.co.uk

Further information

For more information about rail services, including fares, routes and schedules, look at www.nationalrail.co.uk, or telephone National Rail Enquiries on 08457 484950 (24 hours a day, from within the UK).

Bookings

You can book rail tickets:

- **In person** at UK train stations with ticket offices or self-service ticket machines, or at all National Rail-appointed travel agents throughout the UK (indicated by a sign with a double arrows symbol which National Rail-appointed agents display). If you book this way, you can pay by cash, cheque, credit card or bank debit card.
- **By telephone.** Many train companies have a booking line – call any of the numbers in the box on the next page, which will also help if you are not sure which train company you wish to use. To book by telephone, you'll have to give your credit card number to the booking agent.
- **Over the internet.** Some train companies operate websites and there are also specialised train ticket websites like www.thetrainline.com, which can also be used to book tickets. To book online, you will have to use a credit card.



UK train company booking lines

<i>Arriva Trains Wales</i>	0870 900 0773
<i>c2c</i>	0845 744 4422
<i>Central Trains</i>	0870 609 6060
<i>Chiltern Railways</i>	0845 600 5165
<i>Eurostar</i>	0870 518 6186
<i>First Great Western</i>	0845 700 0125
<i>First Great Western Link</i>	0845 730 0700
<i>First Scot Rail</i>	0845 755 0033
<i>Great North Eastern Railway</i>	0845 722 5225
<i>Midland Mainline</i>	0845 712 5678
<i>Northern</i>	0845 600 1159
<i>One</i>	0845 600 7245
<i>Silverlink Trains</i>	0870 512 5240
<i>Southern</i>	0870 830 6000 (no telesales)
<i>South West Trains</i>	0845 600 0650
<i>Thameslink Rail</i>	0845 330 6333
<i>Virgin Trains</i>	0845 722 2333
<i>Wessex Trains</i>	0870 900 2320
<i>West Anglia Great Northern</i>	0870 850 8822

Trains to and from	Use
Places south-east of London, including Canterbury, Dover, Margate	Charing Cross Station
Places south and south-east of London, including Brighton, Gatwick, Worthing	Victoria Station
Places south-west of London, including Bournemouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Winchester	Waterloo Station
Places to the west, including Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Exeter, Oxford, Plymouth, Reading, Swansea	Paddington Station
Places to the north-west, including Birmingham, Blackpool, Chester, Coventry, Glasgow, Lancaster, Liverpool, Manchester	Euston Station
Places to the north-east, including Aberdeen, Cambridge, Derby, Edinburgh, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Loughborough, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, York	King's Cross and St Pancras Stations



5.3 Catching a coach

The network of coach services is even more extensive than the rail network, reaching many small and remote places. There are many different coach operators. Some specialise in a particular route and others serve wider areas. National Express is a major coach company that operates throughout the UK. (For journeys entirely within Scotland, Scottish Citylink operates in place of National Express.)

In smaller towns and villages, coaches stop by the side of the road to pick up and drop off passengers, but larger towns and cities have coach stations. In London, most coaches arrive at and depart from Victoria Coach Station, which is about ten minutes' walk from Victoria railway station. You can buy tickets for your journey here and find out about the various coach services.

Fares

Fares tend to be much cheaper than for rail services but travel times are longer. Specific fares vary from service to service. Here are some examples of single (one-way) weekday adult fares if booked in advance:

London – Bristol	£14.50
London – Edinburgh	£29.50
London – Leeds	£17.50
London – Manchester	£19.00
London – Oxford	£11.00
London – Swansea	£19.50

Further information

For details of National Express fares and schedules, check www.nationalexpress.com, or telephone 0870 580 8080 (from 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. daily) from within the UK.

For Scottish Citylink information, check www.citylink.co.uk, or telephone 0870 550 5050 (from 8.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. daily) from within the UK.

For details of other companies' services, visit Victoria Coach Station or check UK telephone directories.

5.4 The London Underground

Here is a beginner's guide to 'the tube', one of the easiest ways to get around London.

Learning your lines

There are 12 different lines, each with its own name (e.g. the Piccadilly line, the Circle line). Each line is a different colour on the map of the Underground system. You can find the map in the ticket hall at each Underground station, and usually on the platforms as well. Sections of the map are also displayed in the carriages of the Underground trains.



Planning your route

Before you begin, it helps to know which line you are starting on and on which line your destination can be found. If they are on different lines, look at the map to see where the two lines cross, and note the name of the station where they meet – that is where you have to change trains. (If the two lines do not cross, keep looking until you find a third line that crosses both of the other two. Then you will need to change trains twice.)

Buying a ticket

You can buy a ticket from one of the automatic machines or from the ticket office. Either way, you need to know the name of the station you are going to. You also need to know whether you want a 'single' ticket (valid just to get you to your destination) or a 'return' (to get you there and back again).

Fares are based on a zone system: the more zones you travel through, the more expensive your fare is. (Some of the Underground maps show which stations are in which zones.) A single ticket for travel through all six zones currently costs £4.00.

Depending how far you are travelling and how many journeys you need to make, it may be cheaper to buy a one-day Travelcard, which gives you unlimited travel on all London Underground and bus services the day you buy it. A one-day Travelcard covering all six zones, after 9.30 a.m. on weekdays, and all day on Saturdays and Sundays, currently costs £6.80.

If you plan to travel regularly on the same route it will be cheaper for you to buy a weekly or a monthly season ticket. In London you can also buy an Oyster Smartcard. You can put your Travelcard and Bus Pass season ticket on it, add travel value (cash) to pay as you go, or have a combination of both. (See www.tfl.gov.uk/oystercard)

Entering the system

At most stations you must pass through an automatic gate. Put your ticket into the slot (to the right of the gate). When the gate opens, pass through. As you pass through, your ticket will pop up from another slot on the top. Pull your ticket out of the slot and take it with you; you need it at the end of your journey.

If you have baggage with you, you can go through a special gate where you can pass your baggage through more easily. Show your ticket to an attendant and ask him or her to let you through this gate.

Most stations have long escalators leading to and from the trains. Try to stand to the right-hand side, leaving space for people to walk past you on the left.

Changing trains

Get off at the station where the line you are on crosses the line you need. Follow the signs for the line you need, and the direction you want to go in.



Leaving the system

At most stations, you must pass through an automatic gate again to leave the station. Put your ticket in the slot as before. If you bought a return ticket or a Travelcard, your ticket will pop up for you to collect again, so that you can use it later. If you bought a single (or if you are on the return trip of your return ticket), your ticket will stay in the machine.

Further information

To find out more about the London Underground and about other transport options in London, check the following website:

- www.tfl.gov.uk
-

5.5 Tips on taking taxis

The advantages:

- Door-to-door service; you do not have to work out your own route, change trains or switch from one kind of transport to another.
- If you have lots of luggage with you, loading it into a taxi once is easier than hauling it on and off trains, coaches, etc.
- In London, black taxis – ‘black cabs’ – are regulated by a government body.


The disadvantages:

Taking taxis can be expensive, especially if you have a long way to travel. For example:

- a taxi from Heathrow to central London can cost at least £40–£50
- a taxi from a non-London airport to a college or university in the area may cost about £15–£30, depending on the length of the journey.

Our advice:

- If you are travelling from a London airport to central London by yourself, save yourself some money and take a train or coach, or the Underground from Heathrow.
- If you are travelling from a London airport to central London with one or two other people AND you have more luggage than you can carry between you AND you can afford to spend a little extra, take a taxi and split the fare evenly. It will still cost you more than other methods, but will save you a lot of trouble.
- If you are travelling from a regional airport, ask your college or university (ahead of time) for information about your travel options, including taxi fares, and follow their advice.
- If you are going to visit someone’s home for the first time, ask him or her the best way to get there. Sometimes taking a taxi can be simpler than trying to work out local bus routes. In smaller cities, typical taxi fares may be about £5–£10.
- If you are out late at night after the buses and trains have stopped running, take a taxi home; do not walk.

- 
- Make sure that you only take a licensed taxi. Unlicensed taxis operate in many cities, are illegal and can pose a risk to your safety (see section 3.6 *Personal safety*).

Always remember: when taking a taxi, it is a good idea to ask the driver for a rough idea of what the fare will be before you start. It is customary to tip the driver about ten per cent of the total fare.

5.6 Cars and motorcycles

With so many other transport options available, most students get along very happily in the UK without their own vehicle. But if you do want to drive while here, this is what you need to know.

To drive a car or motorcycle in the UK, you must have a valid licence and you must be at least 17 years old (16 years old to drive a moped). You must be at least 21 to drive a medium- or large-sized vehicle, minibus or bus. During your first year in the UK, you may use your driving licence from your own country or an international driving permit. After that, what happens depends on whether your driving licence is from an EEA country, another specified country, or any other country. See the relevant section below.

Licence requirements: EEA drivers

If you have a full licence issued by an EEA country, you can use your national licence the whole time you are in the UK, as long as it remains valid. (If your EEA licence expires while you are in the UK and you want to continue to drive here, you need to get a UK licence.) The countries of the EEA are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

The rules are slightly different in the following circumstances:

- if your original licence was issued in a non-EEA country, and you later exchanged that licence for one from an EEA country
- if your original licence was issued in an EEA country, and you later exchanged that licence for one from a non-EEA country.

If you fall into either of these categories, contact the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency for advice (see 'Further information' on page 67), or read the UKCOSA Guidance Note: *Driving in Great Britain: a guide for international students* (see section 5.8).

Licence requirements: drivers from specified countries

This section applies to you if your driving licence is from: Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Malta, Monaco, New Zealand, Republic of Cyprus, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, or Zimbabwe.



If you have a licence from one of the countries listed above, and you are in the UK for at least one year, you can drive small vehicles (e.g. cars, motorcycles, vans to 3.5 tonnes) for 12 months from the day you arrive in the UK. If you want to continue driving after the 12 month period, you must get a UK driving licence before the 12 months are up. To start the process of exchanging your licence for a UK licence, go to any post office and pick up form D1. Fill in the form and follow the instructions on it. There is a charge for obtaining a licence; details are included on the form.

Licence requirements: all other drivers

This section applies to you if any country other than those listed in the two sections above issued your driving licence.

1 If you will be in the UK for 12 months or less, you can drive small vehicles (e.g. cars, motorcycles, vans up to 3.5 tonnes) for up to 12 months from the day you arrive in the UK, if:

- you have a full valid driving licence from your own country or an international driving permit
- your licence or permit remains valid during your stay.

2 If you stay in the UK for more than 12 months, your valid foreign licence or international driving permit allows you to drive for 12 months from the day you first arrive in the UK. Even if you stay in the UK only during term-time and then return home during the holidays, you are still considered to be resident in the UK for the full period – you cannot start a new 12-month period after a visit home. So, if you want to continue driving after the 12-month date, you will have to apply for a UK provisional licence ahead of time (look for details at your local post office) and take a driving test.

Main rules of the road

- Drive on the left-hand side of the road and overtake on the right.
- Seat belts must be fitted in the front seats of the car. The driver and any passengers in the front seats must wear the seat belts. If seat belts are fitted in the rear seats, passengers sitting there must also wear the belts.
- You must wear a crash helmet when riding a motorcycle or moped.
- Do not drive any motor vehicle if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- Obey the speed limits. These are displayed on signs along the roadside. The usual limits are 30 or sometimes 40 mph (miles per hour) in towns and built-up areas, 70 mph on motorways, and 60 mph on all other roads.
- You must not drive without a valid licence – make sure you have one, as outlined in the preceding section.
- You must not drive without valid insurance.



Buying and owning a car

If you own a car in the UK, you must do all of the following:

- Make sure that it is registered in your name. When you buy a new or second-hand car you should be given the car's registration document. You must immediately register or re-register the car in your name by completing the document and sending it to the address shown on the document.
- Keep it insured. See chapter 6 (*Financial and legal matters*), section 6.7.
- Make sure it has a valid MOT certificate if it is over three years old. All cars over three years old must pass a roadworthiness test that is run by the MOT (Ministry of Transport). The MOT test is available at most garages, but make sure you choose a garage that is an approved MOT centre – look for a sign which says this.
- Pay road tax: the UK government recently introduced a banding system of car tax. Cars with certain engine types and emission levels now qualify for reductions in, or even exemption from, road tax duty.

You can pay the tax at most main post offices, or online via the DVLA website. If paying at a post office you will need to take your registration document, insurance certificate and MOT certificate, if applicable, with an accepted form of payment (cash, cheque with guarantee card, credit or debit card). You will then receive a tax disc, which you must display at all times by attaching to the inside of your windscreen.

If driving in central London you should be aware of the Congestion Charge system currently in force. Further information can be found at www.cclondon.com

Further information

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), Customer Enquiries (Drivers) Unit, DVLC, Swansea SA6 7JL, telephone +44 (0)870 240 0009, fax +44 (0)1792 783071, www.dvla.gov.uk

Services for drivers

If you plan to buy your own car to use in the UK, consider joining one of the motoring organisations. For an annual fee, these organisations offer:

- breakdown and recovery services (they'll come and help you if your car breaks down)
- advice on insurance and route-planning
- information about motoring, motoring laws and regulations.



The two best-known organisations are the Automobile Association (AA) and the RAC, but there are a number of others as well. Ask your students' union, or the NUS, about special rates for students.

Further information

Automobile Association (AA), Contact Centre, Carr Ellison House, William Armstrong Drive, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7YA, telephone (in the UK) 0870 600 0371, www.theaa.com

RAC Motoring Services, Lambert House, Stockport Road, Cheadle SK8 2DY, telephone (in the UK) 0870 572 2722, www.rac.co.uk

5.7 Bicycle basics

Bicycles are a flexible, convenient and economical form of transportation, and many students in the UK use bikes to get around their college or university and the surrounding area. In cycle shops around the UK, you can find everything from highly advanced racing bikes with dozens of gears to simple bikes with no gears at all. Buying a used bicycle can be a good low-cost choice.

This is a particularly good time to cycle in the UK. The Government wants to increase the use of bicycles (and decrease the use of cars), so steps are being taken to encourage people to cycle more and drive less.

Further information

For information about the National Cycle Network Centre, contact Sustrans, 2 Cathedral Square, College Green, Bristol BS1 5DD, telephone +44 (0)117 926 8893, fax +44 (0) 117 929 4173, www.sustrans.org

Bicycling tips

If you want to use a bicycle while you are in the UK, it is a good idea to take a 'familiarisation' course if there is one available. The local police or the local authority sometimes offer these courses, and they can teach you how to ride a bicycle safely while you are here. Top safety tips include:

- wear a safety helmet on a bicycle, although it is not compulsory
- make sure that your bicycle has proper lights, compulsory if you ride at night
- you should also wear some reflective clothing if you ride at night
- use a good locking device to reduce the chance of theft
- if you want, you can have a special number engraved on your bicycle and register it with the police. If your bicycle is ever stolen, this number can help the police to identify it.



5.8 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *Arriving in the UK; Driving in Great Britain: a guide for international students* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone +44 (0)20 7107 9922 (an advice service is available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.), www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/advice.htm)



Financial and legal matters



Money matters are often on the minds of students, but they do not have to be a problem. Learn how to estimate your expenses, decide how to pay for them, sort out a bank account, and manage your money day to day. The figures quoted in this chapter are all in pounds (sterling). Convert each figure into your own currency so that you can get a realistic idea of the costs.

In this chapter:

- 6.1 **Fees and the cost of study** – what to budget for your course expenses
- 6.2 **Cost of living** – what to budget for your living expenses
- 6.3 **Scholarships and funding** – five funding schemes you should know about
- 6.4 **Working in the UK** – how to add to your bank account and your CV at the same time
- 6.5 **Banking basics** – get to grips with cash cards, current accounts, currency and more
- 6.6 **Managing your money** – two simple steps that will keep you in control of your finances
- 6.7 **Insurance** – three kinds of coverage you might need while you are here
- 6.8 **Help with legal matters** – if you run into trouble with the law, here's how to handle it
- 6.9 **Further reading**



6.1 Fees and the cost of study

To gain entry clearance to the UK, you will need to prove that you have enough money to cover all your course fees and living expenses (see chapter 2 – *Entry clearance requirements*). To calculate whether you have enough money, you first need to work out how much you will need. The best source of information about course fees is your college or university – the admissions staff are the ones who can tell you exactly how much your course will cost. Here is a rough guide to what you can expect.

English language courses:

- fees vary greatly, but expect to pay about £100 per week for large-class tuition and £300 per week or more for intensive small-class tuition.

Always check the cost of fees with the school or college to which you are thinking of applying. Academic English study courses may cost £100–£200 per week but some universities offer these free of charge to students who are going to take their main course of study there.

GCSEs, A-levels and other equivalents:

- day pupils pay £1,500–£4,000 per term and boarders pay £3,000–£7,000 per term.

Students boarding in independent schools will not need to budget for accommodation, food or laundry costs. It is important to check what else the fees include, such as textbooks and examination fees.

Non-degree career-based and professional courses:

- £3,300–£5,000 a year.

Degree courses:

- £8,000 a year for arts or business courses
- £10,400 a year for science courses.

Remember: most undergraduate honours courses take just three years to complete, compared with four years in the USA and Australia. In Scotland, though, honours degree courses last four years – equivalent to doing an access course plus a degree course elsewhere in the UK.

Postgraduate courses (Master's degrees, PG Cert, PG Dip, PhD):

- £9,000 for arts or business courses (£13,000 or more for MBA programmes)
- £10,500 for science courses.

Most UK Master's courses take just a year, compared with two years in the USA and Australia. PhDs can involve at least three years' full-time study.

The fees quoted above are typical 'overseas' fees. But some international students qualify for 'home' fees (the fees charged to UK students), which are lower because they're subsidised by the UK government. If you are a national of an EU (European Union) country, or if you have been living in the UK for a while already, you may qualify for these reduced fees. Here are the details.



UK residents

If you have been living in the UK, you will qualify for home fees if you meet all three of the following conditions.

- You were 'settled' in the UK on 1 September, 1 January or 1 April (whichever is closest to the beginning of your course). For example, if your course begins in October 2007 you must be 'settled' by 1 September 2007. 'Settled' means you were ordinarily resident in the UK without any immigration restrictions on the length of your stay. To be settled, you must either be a full British citizen, or have right of abode, or have indefinite leave to enter/remain.
- You were ordinarily resident in the UK for the full three years leading up to 1 September, 1 January or 1 April (whichever is closest to the beginning of your course). For example, if your course begins in October 2007, you must have been ordinarily resident in the UK from 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2007. Under the regulations, 'ordinarily resident' means living in the UK habitually, normally, lawfully and by choice.
- During that entire three-year period, at no time were you in the UK just because you were receiving full-time education; you were always living here for reasons other than study.

EU nationals

If you are a national or the child of a national of an EU country, you will qualify for home fees if:

- you were ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland for the three years leading up to 1 September, 1 January or 1 April (whichever is closest to the beginning of your course),
and
- you were not there just because you were a full-time student on a course; you were genuinely living in the EEA or Switzerland for reasons other than study.

There are a few exceptions to these rules. For example, if the only reason you don't meet the rule is because you (or your parent, your spouse or your civil partner) were temporarily working abroad during that period, then you still qualify. Other people who can qualify for home fees are: refugees, people who have been granted exceptional leave, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave. EEA/Swiss migrant workers and the spouse, civil partner and children of these people.

Your college or university makes the final decision about whether or not you qualify for home fees. They will base the decision on the evidence you give them, so be sure to provide all the relevant documents and details.

Top-up fees

Effective from the academic year 2007, it is proposed that some higher education institutions will introduce top-up fees of variable amounts up to £3,000. This will apply to UK and EU students only who are paying home fees. International students who pay 'overseas' fees are unaffected by this legislation.

Further information

Do you think you might qualify for home fees as a UK resident or an EU national? To find out, contact your nearest British Council office in your own country, or the welfare officer or students' union at your institution if you're already in the UK.

See chapter 2 (*Entry clearance requirements*) for a reminder of which countries are in the EU and the EEA.

See UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *Fees and student support* available on the internet at www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/guidenote.htm

6.2 Cost of living

Apart from the fees for your course itself, how much will it cost you to live in the UK? As a rough guide, for a nine-month academic year, you should allow (on average):

- £7,500 if you will be living in London (or £800 per month)
- £5,500 if you will be living elsewhere in the UK (or £600 per month).

These figures are based on 2004 prices, and include the cost of accommodation, heating, lighting, food, clothing, books and daily travel for one person for a nine-month academic year. Living costs for career-based and access or foundation courses tend to be lower than these average figures.

Please note that in London in particular you can expect to spend a significant proportion (half or more) of your monthly budget on accommodation.

Cost breakdown

Here are some typical prices for specific items and services in the UK overall. In London you might need to pay a little more for some things. On the other hand, at discount stores and street markets (both in London and elsewhere), you may be able to find many of these things for less than the prices given below.

Deposit on rented accommodation: £250–£500 (one month's rent)

Heat and light (if charged separately): £20–£40 per month, depending on the season

Food (if not included in accommodation): £30–£40 per week

Wine: £3–£5 for a 75cl bottle (table wine)

Beer: £1 for a half-litre can of lager; £1.70–£2.50 for a pint of bitter in a pub or bar

Personal hygiene items, cosmetics, etc: £10 per month

Haircut: £7–£20

T-shirts, underwear: £10 and under

Shirts and tops, lightweight sweaters, lightweight shoes: £25 and under

Jeans and other casual trousers, skirts, lightweight outdoor jackets, heavier sweaters, heavier shoes: £35 and under

Raincoats and other outerwear, boots: £60 and under



Winter coats: £100 and under

Laundry: £16–£20 per month

Dry cleaning: £4 for skirt or trousers; £9 for heavy coat

Small electrical appliances (e.g. hairdryer, kettle): £20 and under

Textbooks: £10–£50 or more; some may be available second-hand for less

Paperback books to read for leisure: £5–£10; second-hand books as little as £1 or less

Newspapers: 30p–£1.20 per issue

Magazines: 50p–£3

CDs: £5–£15

Television licence: you need a television licence to use any television receiving equipment such as a television set, set-top boxes, video or DVD recorders, computers or mobile phones to watch or record television programmes as they are being shown. A television licence currently costs £131.50 per year per household. Further guidance can be obtained from www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Phone card (for use in public telephones): choice of £2, £5, £10 or £20. Some excellent deals may also be available online.

Restaurant meal: £5 per head minimum; £15 per head average (drinks extra)

Cinema ticket: £4–£10

Theatre ticket: £10–£30

Concert ticket: £5–£30

Swimming pool use: £2.50

Tennis/squash court: £3–£5 per hour

Special reductions are offered for students at many local shops, theatres, cinemas, museums and galleries; and special student fares are available on buses and trains. Some stores operate loyalty schemes offering a range of rewards, from cashback to money-off vouchers. Ask at your students' union for details.

Entertainment expenses, in particular, vary a great deal from student to student. Also, remember that in addition to these entertainment expenses, you'll have monthly expenses such as rent and heat, and occasional expenses such as clothing and textbooks.

6.3 Scholarships and funding

If you are hoping for help with funding your studies in the UK, you need to get working on this as soon as you can – it is almost impossible to make arrangements for financial support once you have left your own country. Start by enquiring with your own Ministry of Education or Department of Education. Your local British Council office can provide details of awards available including those offered by UK institutions themselves. You'll also find information and a scholarships database at www.britishcouncil.org



The main scholarship schemes available for international students include:

- British Chevening Scholarships
- Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)
- DFID Shared Scholarship Scheme
- Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme (ORSAS).

British Chevening Scholarships and Fellowships

What they are: Prestigious awards enabling talented international students to study in the UK at postgraduate level. About 2,000 new Scholarships and Fellowships are currently awarded each year to students from over 150 countries. There are three types of scholarship:

- a full award, where all the fees, a living allowance and travel to and from the UK are paid for
- a fees-only award, where all or part of the fees are paid
- a partial award, where a combination of the fees and the allowances allowed in the full award are paid.

The value of the scholarship will vary, depending on the type of award, the length of the course and the country from which the student comes.

Funded by: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Eligibility: For scholarships you should be undertaking a postgraduate diploma or Master's course in the UK lasting up to one year. (Awards are sometimes given for shorter courses as well.) Ideally, you should already be established in a career.

Applications: Contact the British Council or the British Embassy or High Commission in your own country for details. You should be resident in your home country when you apply. Candidates are selected by British Embassies and High Commissions overseas.

Chevening Fellowships offer awards for professional development on a set of short courses in the UK, which are commissioned and funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Fellowships are aimed at mid-career professionals. Potential candidates are identified by UK Embassies and High Commissions and nominated to relevant selection panels in the UK.

For further information about British Chevening Scholarships and Fellowships see www.chevening.com

Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)

What they are: These awards are mainly for postgraduate study, although funding for undergraduate study may be possible if there are no suitable undergraduate courses in your home country.

Funded by: The Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Eligibility: You must be a citizen of either a Commonwealth country or a British dependent territory. A university degree, or equivalent, is usually required.



Applications: Apply to the Commonwealth Scholarship Agency in your country (ask your local British Council office for information). You must be resident in your own country when you apply.

DFID Shared Scholarship Scheme

What they are: A joint initiative by the Department for International Development (DFID) and certain UK higher education institutions. The awards are normally given for taught postgraduate courses. In rare cases, an award may be made for undergraduate study if the course is not available at an institution in your home country.

Funded by: The Department for International Development and participating UK higher education institutions.

Eligibility: You must normally be under 35 years of age, you must be resident in a developing Commonwealth country, and you must not be currently employed by your government or an international organisation. You should be planning to study a subject related to development and be fluent in English.

Applications: Apply directly to one of the participating institutions. You can ask for a list of participating institutions from the British High Commission or your local British Council office.

Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme (ORSAS)

What they are: Awards for full-time postgraduate study, for a period of one year, initially. They make up the difference between home and overseas students' fees.

Funded by: The Department for Education and Skills.

Eligibility: You must be a postgraduate research student at a publicly funded higher education institution in the UK. You will need to demonstrate academic merit and research potential.

Applications: Application forms are available from UK higher education institutions – contact the one where you want to study. For further information, contact the ORSAS office at Universities UK: Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HQ, telephone +44 (0)20 7419 4111, fax +44 (0)20 7388 8649, e-mail ors_scheme@universitiesuk.ac.uk, www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

6.4 Working in the UK

If your course in the UK lasts under six months, you can ask for permission to work when you apply for leave to enter the UK. If your course lasts longer than six months, you should automatically be given permission to work. Check that the stamp or sticker in your passport says 'Work and any changes must be authorised'. This means that you are allowed to work full time in the UK during the vacations, and part time (up to 20 hours a week) during term-time. Your spouse or civil partner and children may be given permission to work as well. This can be a useful way to develop your work skills and strengthen your CV.

To find a job, start with the employment advice service at your college or university. Many institutions have a few openings for students to work on campus in various



roles, and the employment advice service should have the details. They will probably also have information about current vacancies or upcoming vacation jobs off campus, and about what sort of work is usually available in the area.

Other ways to find a part-time or vacation job in the UK include:

- checking the notice boards around your institution
- reading the advertisements in the local newspaper
- looking for 'help wanted' signs in the windows of local shops, restaurants and businesses
- word of mouth – tell your friends, your tutor, your landlord, etc., that you are looking for a job – someone might know of an opening.

6.5 Banking basics

It's important to make secure arrangements for your cash. You should not carry large sums of money with you or leave a lot of cash in your lodgings. Instead, open a bank account or building society account and make full use of the facilities it offers.

Most banks in the UK are open from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday and many are open on Saturdays. But if you have a cash card for your account, you can withdraw money from your account at any time of the day, any day of the week, by using a cash machine (see 'Cash card' below).

Find out as much as you can about banking in the UK before you get here. Ask your college or university what your options are for paying your fees, so that you know what facilities you will need. And then contact your bank in your home country and ask:

- how best to transfer your money to the UK
- about running a bank account in the UK
- whether your bank has a special relationship with any of the UK banks
- whether you can use cash cards from your home bank in cash machines in the UK.

Speaking the language: UK banking terms

Balance: The amount of money in your account at any particular moment.

Cash card: Also called 'cashpoint card'. This plastic card allows you to take money from your account at any time of the day, including outside banking hours, by using a cash machine (also called 'cashpoint'). You will find cash machines built into the wall outside the bank, and also in other places such as outside supermarkets, at petrol stations and in large shopping centres. You can use your card in the cash machines of other banks. There is a limit on how much money you can take out of your account each day by cash card. There may be a charge if you use a cash machine that is not provided by your own bank or building society, for example in certain supermarkets.

Cheque guarantee card: A plastic card which guarantees that your bank will pay the cheques you write, usually up to a fixed limit shown on the card. The cheque guarantee card and the cash card are usually combined as one card, often with debit-card facilities as well (see below).



Current account: A bank account, with a cheque book, for depositing and withdrawing money. Most current accounts pay little or no interest.

Debit card: A plastic card that allows you to spend money directly from your account without withdrawing cash or writing a cheque. Often combined with cash-card and cheque-guarantee facilities as one card.

To deposit: To put money into an account. Also called 'to pay in'.

Deposit account: A savings account where money can earn interest. You may have to give notice if you wish to withdraw any money, and you cannot write cheques for this account.

Interest: Extra money paid to you on money you have deposited, or extra money you pay on money you have borrowed by loans or overdraft.

Overdraft/to overdraw: To overdraw your account means to spend more money than you have in your account. When you overdraw, you are basically borrowing money from the bank. If you think you might need to do this, you should arrange an overdraft with your bank when you set up your account: you and the bank agree on an amount of money by which you may overspend. You will probably have to pay interest and bank charges on your overdraft, although some banks offer free overdraft arrangements for students.

PIN: When you receive your cash card or debit card for your account, the bank will also send you a personal identification number (PIN). Memorise this number: you will need to key it into the machine each time you use your card. Do not tell anyone else your number. Once you are sure that you know the number, destroy the slip that had the number written on it and do not write the number down anywhere else. These are security precautions: if anyone else found out your PIN and found or took your card, they could access your account and take money from it.

To withdraw: To take money from your account by writing a cheque or using a cash card.

Choosing an account

Choose your bank in the UK carefully. Try to visit the main banks and building societies (see below) near your college or university to see which can offer you the best service. Also, check with the welfare officer or student services department at your institution: they may have information about the services offered by local banks.

Your options include:

- **Banks.** The main ones offer specific accounts for full-time students, featuring special facilities and fewer charges. But at some banks, these special student accounts are available to UK students only, so ask about this before you decide where to open your account.
- **Building societies.** These institutions were originally formed to lend money to people who wanted to buy a house. Now they offer a range of financial services, including banking. You may find that, unlike some banks, a building society will offer you interest on a current account.



- **Post Office.** The Post Office offers a banking service, called Alliance & Leicester Giro, and a range of investment services where you can put your money if you want to earn interest. These accounts tend to be less flexible for international transactions than the services offered by banks and building societies. Consider them only if you want to have an extra account in addition to your main one.

The most useful account to arrange at first is a current account. You can put money into the account in cash, or by cheque or bank draft made out to you. Then you can write cheques and withdraw cash yourself. To withdraw cash, you can either write a cheque to yourself or write it to 'cash' – or you can use your cash card in a cash machine (see the beginning of this section).

If you find you are paying large amounts of money into your account, you might want to open a deposit account as well, so that you can earn interest on your money.

When you go to the bank to open an account, you will need to take your passport and a letter of acceptance from your college or university. A letter of reference from your bank in your home country may also be useful. The bank will also ask for evidence of your UK address: show them your agreement with your hall of residence, or tenancy agreement if you live in private accommodation. When giving the bank details of your address in your home country, or if you use a PO box for receiving mail, it helps to give a street address as well as a postal address if you can.

For more information, visit www.postoffice.co.uk and www.nsandi.com

Mastering pounds and pence

- The basic unit of British currency – 'sterling' – is the pound (£).
- One pound is made up of 100 pence (p).
- The most common paper bank notes are for £20, £10 and £5; you may also see £50 notes from time to time.
- Coins are for £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p and 1p.

6.6 Managing your money

It is worth making a little effort to keep your financial affairs in good shape. Keep your money under control, and you can concentrate on the real business of studying and living in the UK. Here are two tips for managing your finances.

1 Make full use of banking facilities

Once you have opened a bank account, you can ask the bank's financial advisers to help you decide how to manage your money. You can use your bank account (or other account) to pay your regular bills such as electricity, gas and telephone by direct debit or by standing order, on a regular basis. The financial advisers can help you to organise a budget account to pay regular bills or help you to deal with any periods when you might need an overdraft facility. If you have a financial sponsor, make sure you find out from them exactly when the money will become available to you and how much there will be.



You can also use cheques to pay for goods and services. You may also find that you can use a cash card linked to an account that you have in your own country to draw money from your home account while you are in the UK. Cards carrying signs such as Cirrus or Maestro may have this facility. Ask your home bank about this before you leave, in order to ensure that you bring the right cards with you.

2 Deal with financial problems promptly

Monitor your account in the UK carefully and make sure you do not overdraw – or, if you have arranged an overdraft, make sure you do not go over the amount you agreed with the bank. If you do run into any money problems, take the initiative and sort them out quickly – do not risk going into debt or falling behind with your rent. Problems may arise, for example, if there is a sudden change in the political situation in your country, if there are unexpected delays in transferring your money, or if your personal circumstances change (e.g. your accommodation arrangements, your marital status).

In these situations, do not be tempted to borrow money. Instead, get advice from a reliable source. Start by meeting with the student counsellor at your college or university. He or she can tell you what to do about paying your tuition fees, and whether there are any college funds or charitable trusts that might be able to help you. If you are building up debts on credit cards or rent arrears, debt counselling may be available at your institution or at a local Citizens Advice Bureau. If the problems are caused by political situations or changes in foreign exchange, ask your Embassy or High Commission for advice.

6.7 Insurance

During your stay in the UK, there are three types of insurance that you might need:

- **personal property insurance** – to cover your possessions against damage or theft (if possible, try to arrange this in your own country before you come to the UK)
- **medical insurance** – to cover your medical bills if you are not entitled to NHS services (you may prefer to arrange this in advance; see chapter 7 – *Health*)
- **motor insurance** – it is an offence to drive a car or motorcycle in the UK without this.

For each type, there are many different insurance policies available, so look around until you find one that meets your needs – including your budget. You will find a range of insurance companies listed in your local UK telephone directory, and your bank or building society may also be able to offer you an insurance policy. Many insurance companies have special policies for students. Ask the welfare adviser at your college or university for advice. And make sure that you understand all the conditions before you agree to a policy.



When you are considering a particular policy, ask yourself the following questions:

- What will be paid out to me when I make a claim? Some personal property insurance policies, for example, only pay you the second-hand value of your lost possessions. 'New-for-old' policies will pay you the full cost of replacing the item, but they tend to be more expensive.
- Are there any conditions attached to the policy? Some medical insurance policies will not cover you for pre-existing medical conditions (that is, conditions you already have when you take out the policy). Some personal property policies may not cover your possessions if they are taken away from the place where they are normally kept (for example, if you take your CD-player to a friend's house).
- Are there any exceptions to the policy? For example, a medical insurance policy may not cover you if you play a dangerous sport (find out how they define 'dangerous sport').

Motor insurance

The cost of a car insurance policy will depend on your age, how long you have been driving, where you are living, the age and value of your car, and the type of car it is. You can choose from three different types of car insurance policy:

- comprehensive – the fullest cover but also the most expensive
- third-party, fire and theft
- third-party only – the minimum possible cover and the least expensive option. Third-party insurance covers you if you are legally responsible ('liable' for harming someone else or damaging their property).

Further information

To check the status of an insurance company (or to make a complaint), contact the Association of British Insurers, 51 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HQ, telephone +44 (0)20 7600 3333, fax +44 (0)20 7696 8999, www.abi.org.uk

6.8 Help with legal matters

Happily, most international students complete their courses in the UK without running into any serious legal problems. But if you do find yourself involved in a legal dispute of any kind, ask for help. Here are two options:

- Contact the students' union or welfare officer/counsellor at your college or university. Even if they cannot help you directly, they should be able to advise on where to go for help.
- Contact the Citizens Advice Bureau in your area (see the local telephone directory for the address) for expert advice. They will be able to recommend a lawyer if you need one, and tell you if there is a local law centre providing free legal advice. They will also be able to tell you whether you can claim legal aid to help pay for any court and legal fees.



The police

The police have the power to stop and search anyone who appears to be behaving in a suspicious manner. If you are arrested:

- Try not to be aggressive.
- Do not try to bribe the police officer.
- If you are arrested by plain-clothes police officers, ask to see some form of identification.
- Give your name and address if the officer asks you to.
- Do not sign any statement until you have received advice from a lawyer. (There is always a solicitor on duty at the police station.)
- You will be entitled to make one telephone call. If you use this call to telephone a friend, urge your friend to contact someone from your college or from the students' union and get advice about what you should do next.

If you find yourself in trouble with the police, it is very important to get specialist advice. Contact any of the following:

- your college or university welfare officer
- the students' union at your college or university
- your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- a local law centre.

If you are convicted (found guilty) of an offence, it could seriously damage your position as an international student, so be sure to ask for help as early in the process as possible.

Reminder: obey the local laws

The laws in the UK may not be quite the same as in your own country. Here are a few examples of actions that are illegal in the UK.

It is against the law to:

- possess offensive weapons, e.g. knives (including flick-knives), guns, chemical sprays used for personal defence – even women are not allowed to carry sprays or other deterrents to protect themselves against possible assault (except for rape 'alarms')
- possess or supply hard or soft drugs
- disturb the peace – this is called 'disorderly conduct'. You can be arrested for being too noisy or rowdy.



6.9 Further reading

The Educational Grants Directory, Directory of Social Change, annual, telephone +44 (0)20 7209 5151

Studying in the UK – sources of funding for international students, Foreign and Commonwealth Office/British Council/UKCOSA joint publication

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *EEA students; Fees and student support; Working during your studies; Financial hardship; Your finances and bank account in the UK* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922, www.ukcosa.org.uk)

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has produced a leaflet: *International students working in the UK, what you need to know*. It is available on their website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students

The British Bankers' Association has produced a leaflet: *International students: Opening a bank account*. It is available on their website at: www.bba.org.uk



Health



As an international student, you may be entitled to health care through the UK's National Health Service while you are here. Find out whether you qualify, what services are available, how to make use of them – and how to stay healthy so that you do not need them!

In this chapter:

- 7.1 **The National Health Service** – who is covered, and what to do if you are not
- 7.2 **Emergency services** – how to handle a medical crisis
- 7.3 **Doctors' services** – do not wait until you are ill to find a doctor
- 7.4 **Dentists' services** – how to register for treatment
- 7.5 **Opticians' services** – what to expect if you need new spectacles
- 7.6 **Services for women** – where to turn for specialist advice
- 7.7 **Sexually transmitted diseases** – find out how to avoid them
- 7.8 **Drugs and alcohol** – what to do if you need help
- 7.9 **Meningitis** – how to recognise it and what to do
- 7.10 **Keeping healthy** – eat well, sleep well and keep moving
- 7.11 **Health care checklist – six simple tips to remember**
- 7.12 **Further reading**



7.1 The National Health Service

The National Health Service (NHS) provides free and subsidised treatment for people who live in the UK. As an international student, you may be entitled to NHS hospital treatment if you are:

- enrolled on a course lasting for six months or more
- enrolled on a full-time course in Scotland, no matter how long it lasts
- studying in England and Wales and your course is substantially funded by the UK government; you will receive full NHS hospital treatment from the beginning of your stay even if your course is less than six months long. ‘Substantially’ means at least 35 per cent government-funded. You will need to provide evidence of the funding in order to qualify for free treatment. You will not be eligible for free GP treatment, however.

Otherwise, if you have come to the UK for less than six months to study, you may still be eligible for hospital treatment under the NHS if you are:

- a national of an EEA (European Economic Area) country or a Swiss national resident in the EU or Switzerland. You will be covered for necessary treatment including treatment for pre-existing medical conditions if you have a European health insurance card (available from your national health authority) in your own country before coming to the UK
- from a country that has a reciprocal health agreement with the UK, as follows:

Nationals of:	Residents of:
Armenia	Anguilla
Azerbaijan	Australia
Belarus	Barbados
Bosnia and Herzogovina	British Virgin Islands
Bulgaria	Channel Islands
Croatia	Falkland Islands
Georgia	Isle of Man
Gibraltar	Montserrat
Kazakhstan	St Helena
Kyrgyzstan	Turks and Caicos Islands
Macedonia	
Moldovia	
New Zealand	
Romania	
Russia	
Serbia and Montenegro	
Tajikistan	
Turkmenistan	
Ukraine	
Uzbekistan	

Be careful: this list changes from time to time, so check with the British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate in your country to confirm the current list.



Dependants (defined as spouse or civil partner and children under 16, or under 19 if in full-time education) enjoy the same access to NHS services provided they are resident in the UK with the family member who enjoys exemption from charges. This does not apply to dependants who are only visiting the UK for a short period.

If you are not entitled to NHS treatment you will have to pay the full cost of any treatment you receive in the UK except for treatment that is free for everyone.* This can be very expensive, so make sure you take out a medical insurance policy, either before you leave your home country or as soon as possible after you arrive in the UK. (See chapter 6 – *Financial and legal matters* – section 6.7.)

7.2 Emergency services

In a medical emergency you should either:

- telephone for an ambulance – dial 999 (the call is free), or
- get someone to take you to the nearest hospital with a casualty (accident and emergency) department.

The accident and emergency services provided in the casualty department are free for everyone in the first instance. However, if you are admitted to hospital for treatment after an accident (because you need more treatment than the casualty department offers), and you are not covered by the NHS, you will have to pay for this treatment.

7.3 Doctors' services

Registering with a GP and obtaining an NHS medical card

You should register with a local doctor (also referred to as a general practitioner or GP) as soon as possible after you arrive at your destination and have a permanent address – do not wait until you are ill.

If your college or university has a health centre, go there first. You may be able to register with a doctor there, or they may be able to recommend a local GP. You can also get a list of local GPs from your public library. Alternatively, telephone NHS Direct (0845 4647) and ask for a list of GPs in the area where you live, this is also available on the NHS direct website www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk – check for different details for Wales/Scotland.

* Services that are always free are:

- treatment for accident or emergency
- diagnosis and treatment of certain specified communicable diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted diseases other than HIV. HIV tests and counselling are free
- family planning services (contraception)
- compulsory psychiatric treatment.



General practitioner services are the responsibility of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) for your area. You should contact the Primary Care Trust if you are unable to find a general practice willing to accept you on to their list. The PCT is obliged to find you a doctor.

To register, visit the doctor's receptionist during consulting hours and take your passport and a letter from your institution as proof that you are a student. Ask to be added to the list of NHS patients.

Your NHS number: After you have registered, you will eventually receive a medical card stating your NHS number. Take this card with you whenever you go to see your doctor or any other NHS health-care provider (e.g. a dentist or an optician).

Consulting the doctor: When you go to your doctor for the first time, find out what times the surgery (the doctor's office) is open, and whether you need to make an appointment or you can just drop in. There should also be an emergency telephone number that you can call if you need to see a doctor outside the normal opening hours. Doctors will not normally visit you at your home, but they might if it is an emergency and you are too ill to leave your bed. If you are covered by the NHS, there is no charge for consulting a doctor.

NHS Direct

This 24 hour nurse-led telephone advice service is free and run by the NHS. It provides information on diagnosis and treatment of common conditions:
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Prescription medicines

If the doctor decides you need medicine, he or she will give you a 'prescription': written instructions allowing a pharmacist to give you the medicine. Take the prescription to a chemist's shop (a pharmacy) to get the medicine. You can expect to pay a flat fee for each prescription medication you need – currently £6.50 per item.

You do not have to pay the prescription fee if you fall into any of these categories:

- you are less than 16-years-old (in Wales under 25)
- you are less than 19-years-old and you are in full-time education
- you are pregnant
- you have had a baby within the last 12 months.

If you have a low income, you may not have to pay, or you may be eligible to pay a reduced fee. To arrange this, you will need to get a special certificate. Start by picking up form HC1 from your doctor, dentist, optician, a hospital or Jobcentre Plus office or the Department of Health orderline 0800 555777 (look in the telephone directory under 'Jobcentre'). Fill in the form and send it to Patient Services at the address shown on the form. If you qualify, you will receive an exemption certificate (HC2) or a certificate for partial help (HC3). The certificate should last until the start of the next academic year, or until the end of your course if you are in your final year.



7.4 Dentists' services

You can register with a dentist in the same way that you can register with a GP. Find a dentist, ring them to check that they offer NHS treatment and ask to put your name on their list. You can also contact NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or visit the website to find out which dentists are accepting new patients in your area. But make sure that the dentist accepts NHS patients: some dentists only accept private patients. (This is because private patients pay the dentist the full cost of their treatment all at once, whereas NHS patients pay a reduced rate and then the dentist receives an additional payment later from the NHS.) Once you have been accepted by a dentist, tell him or her your NHS number (from your medical card).

To see a dentist, you have to make an appointment in advance. If your plans change and you cannot keep your appointment, telephone and let them know ahead of time – if you fail to tell them that you are not coming, you will be charged a cancellation fee.

Almost everyone in the UK has to pay something towards the cost of their dental treatment, even for regular check-ups. But if you are eligible for NHS treatment, you can receive your dental treatment at a reduced rate. If you fall into one of the following categories, you will not have to pay for dental treatment:

- you are less than 16 years old
- the treatment is for a child less than 16 years old who is living with you
- you are less than 19 years old and you are in full-time education
- you are pregnant
- you have had a baby within the last 12 months.

If you have a low income, you may be eligible for help with the cost of your dental treatment. The application procedure is the same as for 'Prescription medicines', on the previous page.

7.5 Opticians' services

If you are under 16, or under 19 and in full-time study, you do not have to pay for eye tests.

Otherwise, under the NHS, you will have to pay for:

- eye tests – currently about £20 (note that this is not necessarily cheaper than a private eye test)
- lenses and frames for glasses, and contact lenses.

Prices for lenses and frames vary from place to place, so look around before you buy anything. If you already wear glasses or contact lenses, it is a good idea to bring a spare pair with you – you may find that these items are more expensive in the UK than in your home country.

If you have a low income, you may be eligible for help with the cost of your eye treatment or glasses. The application procedure is the same as for 'Prescription medicines', on the previous page, but make sure that you apply before you pay for any eye treatment, glasses or lenses.



7.6 Services for women

In the UK, there are a number of special health services available for women:

- you have the right to register with a female doctor if you wish
- whether your doctor is male or female, he or she can provide contraceptives, advice on birth control and pregnancy tests.
- Well Woman Clinics offer advice and check-ups. There are clinics in many areas; to find the nearest one, ask your doctor or your college or university.
- Family Planning Clinics provide contraceptives, advice on birth control and pregnancy tests. These services are free to everyone. To find the nearest Family Planning Clinic, look in the local telephone directory, ask your doctor or ask the student welfare adviser at your college or university or visit www.fpa.org.uk
- If you become pregnant during your stay, the welfare officer or student counsellor at your institution can provide help and advice, and can refer you to appropriate professionals if necessary. Your doctor or the local Family Planning Clinic can also advise you of your rights and options. In addition, the British Pregnancy Advisory Service has branches in major cities throughout the UK – ask your local Citizens Advice Bureau where the nearest office is, or contact the head office (see below).
- If you have been subject to any form of physical harassment or sexual assault, seek help and advice immediately. Most large towns and cities have a Rape Crisis Centre – look in the local telephone directory.

Further information

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS), 4th floor, Amec House, Timothy's Bridge Road, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 9BF, telephone action line in the UK: 08457 304030, www.bpas.org

Citizens Advice (for details of your local Citizens Advice Bureau), Myddleton House, 115–123 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LZ, telephone +44 (0)20 7833 2181, fax +44 (0)20 7033 4371, www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Family Planning Association, www.fpa.org.uk

7.7 Sexually transmitted diseases

In the UK, sexual relationships are entirely a matter of personal choice. If you come from a different culture, this approach may be very different from what you are used to.

If you begin a sexual relationship, make sure you understand the risk of catching sexually transmitted diseases, and how to reduce that risk. This is important for both men and women. Some sexually transmitted diseases can be easily treated with antibiotics, but HIV/AIDS can be life-threatening – so do make sure you get (and follow) good advice about reducing the risks. You can get confidential advice and information from your doctor or from the health centre at your college or university or specialist drop-in clinics, on a confidential basis.



If you think you have been in danger of catching a sexually transmitted disease, contact your doctor. He or she will treat your case in confidence (that is, protecting your privacy). There may also be a unit specialising in these illnesses at the local hospital – ask your doctor, contact the hospital or search for a Family Planning Association clinic on www.fpa.org.uk. Diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases is free for everyone but for HIV/AIDS, you may be entitled only to initial diagnosis and associated counselling or emergency care and treatment (that which is immediately necessary).

AIDS advice: For free and confidential advice about HIV/AIDS, telephone the Terence Higgins Trust's national helpline on 0845 122 1200 Monday to Friday, 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 12.00 midday to 6.00 p.m.

7.8 Drugs and alcohol

Drugs

In the UK, it is illegal to use controlled drugs, except under medical supervision (that is, following your doctor's instructions).

But, if you do use illegal drugs and you develop a problem with substance misuse here are two numbers you can telephone for confidential advice:

- Turning Point +44 (0)20 7702 2300
- FRANK 0800 776600 (www.talktofrank.com).

Alcohol

Anyone over 18 years old can legally buy and consume alcoholic drinks in the UK.

If you think you might be drinking too much, get help and advice from one of the following:

- your student counsellor
- your doctor
- Alcoholics Anonymous +44 (0)1904 644026.

7.9 Meningitis

When you have registered with a local doctor, you should make an appointment to be immunised against meningitis. This immunisation is free of charge and provides protection against a common strain of the disease for three to five years.

Meningitis is an infection that causes inflammation (swelling) of the lining of the brain and spinal cord. Although the infection is quite rare, it is extremely dangerous and can result in deafness, blindness, loss of limbs or even death. Meningitis can develop very quickly, sometimes within a matter of hours. Early symptoms are similar to flu, such as feeling feverish or suffering from aching back or joints, headaches and vomiting. If you or anyone you know develops any of the following symptoms, get medical help urgently:

- a severe aversion to light
- a rash that does not fade when pressure is applied (you can test this by pressing the side of a glass against the rash: if the rash does not fade and change colour under the pressure, contact your doctor immediately)
- disorientation
- loss of consciousness (this can lead to coma).

Further information

Speak with your college or university nurse, or contact one of the following:

- **Meningitis Research Foundation**, telephone 080 8800 3344 (free call), www.meningitis.org (information is available on the website in 17 languages)
 - **National Meningitis Trust**, telephone 0845 6000 800 (low-cost call), www.immunisation.org.uk
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7.10 Keeping healthy

The best way to stay healthy while you are in the UK is the same way to stay healthy when you are at home: eat healthy foods, exercise regularly, and make sure you get enough sleep.

Eating a balanced diet (selection of foods) can be a challenge when you first arrive – the food in the UK may be very different from what you are used to. Try to eat each of the following every day:

- lots of fresh fruit and vegetables
- bread, potatoes, rice, noodles or pasta
- some protein, such as beans, lentils, eggs, fish or meat
- some milk, cheese, yogurt or fortified soy products (e.g. soy milk or tofu with calcium and other nutrients added).

Try to get some exercise several times a week. Most colleges and universities in the UK offer lots of opportunities to practise your favourite sport or learn a new one. If you do not like sports, try an exercise class, go dancing, or go for a long walk.

If you come from the tropics and arrive, as many do in the autumn, you will experience short day length and low light levels – quite different from your normal environment. The best you can do is to be aware that this is a problem. Indeed, some long-term residents of the UK find the low winter light levels a problem. Getting out into the daylight for exercise as much as possible will be beneficial.

Coping with minor problems: Travelling to a new country with a different climate and different foods can cause small health upsets. You may develop minor illnesses such as coughs and colds. If you have not had these symptoms before, they may seem worrying at first, but do not be alarmed – these problems are usually easy to treat. Make an appointment to see your doctor, and remember to explain any changes in your lifestyle that might be affecting your health.



7.11 Health-care checklist

Checklist:

- find out whether you are entitled to health care under the NHS
- arrange any necessary insurance, either before you leave home or as soon as you get to the UK
- register with a doctor and a dentist as soon as you can
- ask your doctor to immunise you against meningitis
- eat a balanced diet and get regular exercise
- if you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor, your college welfare officer or your student counsellor.

7.12 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Note for students: *Keeping healthy* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922, www.ukcosa.org.uk)

British Council *Next steps orientation* video for international students. Available from all British Council offices worldwide.

Services and facilities

Once you have sorted out the big issues like accommodation, banking and health care, it is time to think about the day-to-day questions.

Where can you find that winter coat you are going to need? How can you send a birthday card to your sister back home? And where can you go for a good night out? Read on.

In this chapter:

- 8.1 **Activities on campus** – college and university facilities
- 8.2 **Shopping** – who sells what, and when?
- 8.3 **Restaurants** – taste food from all around the world
- 8.4 **Pubs and bars** – central to the UK social scene
- 8.5 **Entertainment** – how to find out what is on near you
- 8.6 **Telephones** – public phones, mobile phones, dialling tones
- 8.7 **E-mail** – three ways to get hooked up in the UK
- 8.8 **Television and radio** – a guide to what is on
- 8.9 **Postal services** – four ways to send a letter
- 8.10 **Water and gas** – how to use them safely
- 8.11 **Education** – sending your family to school
- 8.12 **Services and access for disabled people** – two organisations that can help
- 8.13 **Libraries** – loads of information about local life
- 8.14 **Further reading**





8.1 Activities on campus

As a student in the UK, you will find a range of services and facilities at your disposal. In addition to academic facilities such as libraries and laboratories, most universities and many colleges provide recreational facilities for their students, such as inexpensive restaurants or cafés, pubs, lounges, athletics facilities, and shops where you can buy basic necessities.

Student life can be as active or as quiet as you like. There is a huge range of activities to choose from, beginning almost the moment you arrive. Many colleges and universities provide an orientation programme for new international students in the week before term begins. This is your chance to get to know the campus, find out about essential services and meet other international students.

Then, in the first week of term, many institutions stage a 'Freshers' fair': a programme of social events for new students. ('Freshers' are students in their first year of an undergraduate or a college programme.) During the fair, you will have further opportunities to meet other students at receptions and dances and you will have a chance to find out about the various clubs and societies you can join. Student clubs and societies in the UK reflect a wide range of interests, and may centre around anything from a particular sport, political party or language to a specific computer game, television programme or musical group. Many colleges and universities have an international students' society which provides activities and support for students from outside the UK.

The National Union of Students

The National Union of Students (NUS) is a campaigning organisation that represents the interests of all students in the UK. All universities and most of the larger colleges have a students' union (basically a local branch of the NUS). You can pick up your union card from your local students' union, and as a member of NUS you are entitled to all the privileges and discounts members are afforded; things like cheaper cinema tickets, discounts in shops, pubs and restaurants. Companies that specialise in dealing with students and offer discounts to NUS members as listed on www.nusonline.co.uk

Students' union services and activities vary from one institution to another. They may include any or all of the following:

- campaigning and representing students' rights
- arranging entertainment programmes and social activities for students
- running restaurants, bars and shops on campus
- providing information on student travel, sport and leisure facilities
- offering discounts on a variety of products
- offering advice on welfare issues such as accommodation and immigration requirements.
- providing information and advice on part-time work as well as listing jobs available in the students' union and local area.

Many students' unions have an elected international officer. International students are eligible to stand for elected students' union posts while studying in the UK.

Further information

The National Union of Students (NUS), 461 Holloway Road London N7 6LJ, telephone +44 (0)20 7561 6500 or +44 (0)20 7272 8900, fax +44 (0)20 7263 5713, e-mail nusuk@nus.org.uk, www.nusonline.co.uk

8.2 Shopping

Shopping facilities in the UK are many and varied. Here is an overview of some of the most popular UK shops, but there are also many good local shops that are not part of national or international chains.

Type of shop	Food
Major chains include	Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury, Tesco, Waitrose. In large cities, you can also find smaller shops specialising in international foods.
Typical opening hours –	For supermarkets, Monday to Saturday from 8.00 or 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 or 10.00 p.m. Many are also open for six hours on Sundays from around 10.00 a.m. onwards. Smaller shops are often closed on Sundays and may close earlier or later on other days. There are a limited number of 24-hour stores, some located at petrol stations.
Shopping tips	Supermarkets offer a wide range of goods, and most have an international section where you can find familiar food items. For the most competitive prices: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● choose the store's own brand (the one labelled with the store's name), rather than a national or international brand● arrive shortly before closing time, when prices on some vegetables, meat and dairy items may be reduced because the store needs to sell them by the end of the day.

Type of shop	Shoes
Major chains include:	Clarks, Shoe Express and large department stores.
Typical opening hours	Monday to Saturday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 or 6.00 p.m. Some shops open Sundays as well, especially in major cities and shopping centres. Many have 'late opening' on one or two days a week, staying open until about 9.00 p.m. and in provincial towns there may be an early closing day mid-week when the shops will close after lunch.
Shopping tips	● Watch for major sales in January and summer.



Type of shop	Clothing
Major chains include	Monsoon, Next, Oasis, River Island, Topman, Topshop, plus international chains such as Benetton and Gap
Typical opening hours	Monday to Saturday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 or 6.00 p.m. Some shops open Sundays as well, especially in major cities and shopping centres. Many have 'late opening' on one or two days a week, staying open until about 9.00 p.m. and in provincial towns there may be an early closing day mid-week when the shops will close after lunch.
Shopping tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch for major sales in January and summer. ● As an alternative, charity shops such as Oxfam, Cancer Research, British Heart Foundation and others are a good source of high-quality used clothing at very low prices. ● Also have a look at shops such as TK Maxx and Primark, two chains that sell high-quality clothes at discount prices. ● In their larger stores supermarkets such as Asda and Tesco sell their own clothing ranges, which are good quality and well priced as well as a limited amount of designer label clothing, which they discount heavily when in stock.

Type of shop	Department stores
Major chains include:	BHS, Debenhams, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Woolworths
Typical opening hours	Monday to Saturday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 or 6.00 p.m. Many have 'late opening' on one or two days a week, staying open until about 9.00 p.m. Some may be open Sundays as well, especially in major cities and shopping centres.
Shopping tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They sell clothing plus household goods such as bed-linen, towels, clocks and/or kitchen utensils. ● For major clothing items such as raincoats or winter coats, prices may be lower than at the fashion clothing shops. ● Watch for major sales in January and late summer. ● Cooking utensils and other household goods can be purchases from shops such as the £1 shop where everything is priced at £1.



Type of shop	High street chemists/pharmacies
Major chains include	Boots, Superdrug
Typical opening hours	Normal hours are as for supermarkets or department stores, but chemists' shops take turns staying open outside normal hours, to provide emergency supplies if needed.
Shopping tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● They sell medicines, contraceptives and a wide range of personal-care products such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes, hair-styling products, cosmetics, perfume, shaving cream and razors, tissues, etc.

Type of shop	Books and stationery
Major chains include	Waterstone's and Books Etc. (only books); WH Smith (books, newspapers, magazines, cards and stationery); Rymans and Paperchase (stationery and cards).
Typical opening hours	For the chains, Monday to Saturday from 9.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. or later, and Sundays from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 or 8.00 p.m. Other bookshops may be closed on Sundays, and may close earlier on other days.
Shopping tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Most cities and towns also have many independent bookshops selling new and second-hand books.● Ask your Student Union where students sell books that they have finished with – there will usually be noticeboards or websites where students post 'for sale' notices for all sorts of useful items ranging from books, computers, and kitchen equipment to tickets for events.

Street markets

Many towns and cities have street markets where you can buy a wide range of goods from individual stands. Markets can be a good source of fresh foods, and many offer particularly good prices for household goods, shoes and clothing.

Opening hours: Variable. Some are open Monday to Friday or Monday to Saturday from about 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.; others may be set up on one weekday 'market day' only; others operate on weekends or only on Sundays.

Charity shops

In every town and city there are charity shops that sell good-quality, second-hand items ranging from shoes and clothing through to books and household goods. Items for sale are always clean and serviceable and are exceptionally well priced. For instance a warm winter coat may cost as little as £5.00 and second-hand books 10p. Look for Cancer Research UK; Oxfam; British Heart Foundation; and Help the Aged.



Internet shopping

If you don't want to venture out to the shops and markets, you can do quite a lot of shopping via the internet. These are just some of the many things you can buy:

- airline tickets
- books
- cameras
- CDs
- clothing
- computer hardware, software, accessories and games
- holiday packages
- jewellery
- mobile phones
- stamps
- videos and DVDs
- food (from some supermarkets).

When buying from a website based in the UK, look for evidence that the organisation is registered under the Data Protection Act. Organisations that are registered under the Act must follow strict rules about how they handle the information you give them.

Look for other evidence that the site meets independent standards of integrity and security. For example, the British Consumers' Association has established a Web Trader Code of Practice. Companies that meet the standards set out in the Code can display a special *Which?* icon on their sites. Other organisations have established security standards for online payments. Before placing your order, read any information you can find on the site about security and privacy issues.

When filling out the online order form, look for your web browser's security icon. On most browsers, this will appear in the bottom left corner. On newer browsers the icon is a solid gold padlock, and on older ones it is a solid key. If you don't see the icon, or if it appears as a broken image or with a solid line over it, the site may not be secure and your personal information may be vulnerable to theft.

To be extra safe, buy from companies that also have retail premises – actual shops that you can visit if you have any problems.

Your rights as a consumer

A 'consumer' is someone who buys goods or services. As a consumer in the UK, you have the right to return any faulty goods to the shop where you bought them, and the shop must give you either a replacement or a refund. You have to take the goods back within the guarantee period after you bought them, and you usually have to provide 'proof of purchase' (that is, the sales receipt from the shop).

If you think a shop has treated you unfairly, the local Office of Fair Trading can help – check the local telephone directory (www.yell.com) to find the one nearest to you.



8.3 Restaurants

Eating out in the UK is an international adventure – you can find restaurants serving almost any kind of food you would like to try, especially in the cities and larger towns. Popular options include Chinese, Indian, Italian, Greek and Thai food. Traditional British food is also available, of course, and different regions have their own specialities. Many pubs also serve excellent food (see section 8.4).

With all this choice, the hardest thing about eating out in the UK is deciding where to go. Here are three ways to find a restaurant:

- ask friends or colleagues to recommend one
- look in a national or local restaurant guide (available from bookstores, newsagents and at libraries)
- look in the local *Yellow Pages* telephone directory under 'restaurants'.

Most restaurants display their menu outside so that you can check what they have to offer – and their prices – before you go in. Prices vary widely from one restaurant to another, so do look first.

Opening hours vary:

- Some restaurants are open from about 11.00 or 11.30 a.m. (for lunch) through to about midnight.
- Some may open for a couple of hours for lunch, then close for a while and reopen at about 6.00 or 7.00 p.m. for dinner.
- Some may open for dinner only.
- On Sundays, some restaurants may close early, and smaller ones may not open at all.
- Lunch is normally eaten between 12 and 2.00 p.m. and dinner between 6.00 and 10.00 p.m. It can sometimes be difficult to find service outside these hours in smaller towns but in major cities eating is a 24-hour event.

Tipping and service charges

When you pay your restaurant bill in the UK, tipping (leaving extra money for good service) is optional. But most people do leave a tip, unless they were very unhappy with the service. The usual amount is about 10–15 per cent of the total cost of the bill.

Some restaurants will add a 'service charge' (basically a tip) on to your bill automatically. If you think the service was poor, you do not have to pay this charge.

Takeaway food

'Takeaway' food is cooked food that you buy from the restaurant and take away to eat somewhere else. The most popular kinds include hamburgers, pizzas, kebabs (grilled meat), Indian meals, Chinese meals, and fish and chips. Takeaway food is sometimes cheaper than eating the same food in the restaurant.

If you do not want to go out to pick up your takeaway, you can let your takeaway come to you: many restaurants offer a delivery service. You telephone in your order from home, and the restaurant delivers the food to your door. Some restaurants charge extra for delivery – check when you place your order.



8.4 Pubs and bars

Pubs and bars are an important part of social life in the UK. Most of them have an informal, comfortable atmosphere, and going to the pub is an easy way to get together with friends.

Pubs: Beer is the most popular drink in pubs. There are two main kinds:

- lager (pronounced lah-ger, with a hard g) is light in colour and bubbly or fizzy
- bitter is darker and heavier-tasting, and not very fizzy.

Pubs also serve wine, other kinds of alcohol (e.g. gin, whisky, vodka, etc.), and a range of non-alcoholic drinks, including:

- mineral water
- fruit juices
- fizzy drinks (colas, soda water, etc.)
- tea and coffee.

Many pubs serve food as well as drinks. Traditional pub food is cheap and fairly basic, but you can also find pubs offering restaurant-quality food served in separate dining areas. Some pubs also provide entertainment, such as live music or quiz nights.

Bars: Bars may offer a wide range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, or they may specialise and offer mostly wines or cocktails (mixed drinks). Some also offer meals or light snacks.

Opening hours: The standard legal opening hours for pubs and bars used to be 11.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. (10.30 p.m. on Sundays). However, in 2005, a new law was passed enabling pubs and bars to apply for a 'late licence' to stay open longer. While some pubs and bars did apply for such a licence others decided to keep their old opening hours. Check with the pubs in your area for their opening times. Please note that not all pubs and bars will be open throughout the day. Some pubs close for a while during the day, especially in rural areas.

Age limits: The legal drinking age in the UK is 18. Children are not allowed inside pubs and bars, except where there is a special family room, a separate dining-room or a garden area.

8.5 Entertainment

There is always something entertaining happening in the UK. Artistic and cultural events and facilities are plentiful, from museums and galleries to theatres and cinemas. Head to the nearest concert hall to get your fill of orchestral music, or pop down to a club to indulge your taste for house and jungle. Check out the exhibits and events, and brighten up the winter months by sampling opera, modern dance and alternative comedy. If sport is more your style, you can cheer the local football club from the stands or join in on the pitch with a friendly sports club.

To find out exactly what is going on in your area, keep up with the following sources:

- your students' union
- your students' union newspaper

- your students' union radio station
- your students' union website
- local newspapers
- entertainment listings magazines (e.g. *Time Out* in London, *The List* in Edinburgh, or *Glasgow Events Guide*)
- local libraries (see section 8.12).
- www.upmystreet.com

8.6 Telephones

Public telephones

Some public telephones in the UK are coin-operated and others are card-operated. To use a card-operated telephone, you need either a credit card or a special phonecard. Phonecards come in values of £2, £5, £10 and £20, and you can buy them from newsagents, post offices and supermarkets. The amount of time you get with each card depends on where you are calling: long-distance calls will use up your card faster than local calls.

Most card-operated telephones have a display panel telling you where and how to insert your card, when to dial and when to hang up. If you are using a phonecard, the display will also show you how much money you have left on your card.

Significant sounds

- Before you dial, pick up the receiver and listen for a continuous high-pitched hum. This is the dialling tone.
- After you dial, if the number you want is available, you will hear a repeated double ring.
- If it's busy, you will hear the engaged tone – a repeated single note.
- If a number is unavailable (not in use at all), you will hear a steady tone.
- When your money or card is about to run out, you will hear a series of rapid pips.

Telephone numbers

Telephone numbers in the UK are usually written like this:

- 020 7482 1456
- 0161 592 4836
- 01223 273300

The first three to five numbers in the series are the codes you need to dial if you are outside that particular area. For example, 020 is the code for London and 0161 is for Manchester. If you are inside the Manchester area, you ignore the 0161 and just dial the rest of the number. When telephoning the UK from overseas, ignore the first 0 of any number, so (0161) 592 4836 should be dialled as +44 (for the UK) 161 592 4836.



Useful numbers to know

You can only dial these numbers from within the UK:

- Emergency services: 999

For police, fire and ambulance services. Be ready to tell the operator where you are, what number you are calling from, and what kind of emergency it is.

- Domestic (UK) operator: 100

Dial 100 if you want to reverse the charges for a call (so the person you are calling pays) or make a person-to-person call (so that you only pay if you reach the exact person you want to talk to).

- Directory enquiries in the UK: 118 500 or 118 118

You will pay a premium rate for directory enquiries made by telephone; however, internet enquiries are free on those sites www.bt.com/directory-enquiries and www.yell.com

Call to find out a UK telephone number if you have no telephone directory handy. This call is free from public pay phones, but not from private phones.

- International dialling code: 00

To call overseas, dial 00, then the country code, then the number. Country codes, as well as national codes in the UK, are listed in the front of most telephone directories.

- International operator: 155

Most places in the world can be dialled direct from the UK, but if you need to call a more hard-to-reach place, dial 155. This is also the number to reverse the charges for an international call (so the person you are calling pays) or make an international person-to-person call (so that you only pay if you reach the exact person you want to talk to). These options may not be available for some countries.

- International directory enquiries: 118 505 (calls cost £1.50 per minute)

If you do not know the country code or the number of a person you want to call overseas, dial 118 505 to find out.

Cheap rates

- Inland calls (calls within the UK) are cheapest between 6.00 p.m. and 8.00 a.m.
- International calls are cheapest between 8.00 p.m. and 8.00 a.m.
- Reduced rates can be obtained from web-based companies such as www.just-dial.com www.onetel.co.uk

There are also reduced rates on Saturday and Sunday.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones are very popular in the UK, and a number of packages are available:

- **Pay-monthly plans:** You sign a contract (make an agreement) with a mobile phone network or a service provider and agree to use the network's service for a minimum period, usually 12 months. You choose a tariff (a fee structure) from a range of choices offered by the network. The network or service provider bills you monthly for your calls and services.



- **Pre-paid plans:** You sign a contract with a network or a service provider and pay for a minimum of 12 months' service in advance, at a cheaper rate than for monthly plans. If you use the phone more than the agreed amount, the network or service provider bills you monthly for the extra time/calls.
- **Pay-as-you-go plans:** This is probably the best option as it enables you to carefully budget the use and therefore the cost of the phone. You buy credit (talking time) in advance, either direct from the network or in the form of vouchers. You use the phone until the credit runs out, and then you buy more credit. No contracts or bills are involved.

There are hundreds of different tariffs available. For example, one tariff might have low rates for calls made during the day and higher rates in the evening, and another might have the reverse. The cost of phones also varies widely. If you buy a phone when you sign up for a plan, your network will subsidise the cost of the phone, so you will not have to pay the full price. The subsidies vary from network to network and from plan to plan. So shop around until you find the combination of plan, tariff and phone cost that best meets your needs. Shop staff will be able to give you advice, and most places, including the major supermarkets and high street chains, will offer good deals.

Further information

The following websites, both owned by companies that sell mobile phones, provide general information on mobile networks and services in the UK:

- www.carphonewarehouse.com
 - www.mobiles.co.uk
-

8.7 E-mail

Most colleges and universities in the UK provide free e-mail accounts for their students – check with your students' union. If your institution does not provide e-mail accounts, here are two other ways to keep in touch electronically:

- If you have your own computer and modem, you can sign up directly with one of the hundreds of internet access providers that operate in the UK. Several now offer free access; all you pay is the phone company's charges for your connection time. But do check whether there are any hidden costs, such as charges if you need to call them for help. Also, you will need access to a phone line – if you share a single line with other people, you may need to get their permission to use the line for internet access.
- Sign up with one of the many web-based e-mail services (Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.), and then check your e-mail using online computer terminals at your institution, a public library (see section 8.12), an internet café or even a friend's home. This option should cost you absolutely nothing.



8.8 Television and radio

If you want to watch television while you are in the UK, there are three possibilities:

- a television may be provided as part of the furnishings in your accommodation
- you can rent a television on a monthly or annual basis for the duration of your stay (you can also rent a VCR – video cassette recorder – or a DVD – digital versatile disk – player)
- you can buy a television (and a video or DVD player, if you wish) and then sell it when you leave.

Whichever option you take you will have to have a licence to watch television. A licence currently costs £131.50 a year – the fee supports the BBC, the publicly funded national broadcaster. But one licence covers your entire household, so if you share accommodation with other people, you can all split the fee. You can get a partial refund if you leave the UK at least three months before your television licence expires.

In the next few years (between 2008 and 2012), all television broadcasting in the UK is being switched over to digital, so you will need digital equipment to watch it.

Radio will continue to be broadcast in both analogue and digital for the foreseeable future. For more information see the following website: www.bbc.co.uk/digital/index.shtml

Further information

Contact the Television Licensing Agency, telephone 0870 241 6468 (from within the UK), www.tvlicensing.co.uk

What's on television in the UK

A licence entitles you to watch the five 'terrestrial' channels that broadcast in the UK. Programming is varied and each channel broadcasts a wide range of shows, but there are slight differences in emphasis, which are highlighted below. All five channels broadcast children's shows (usually in the early morning or the afternoon), films and several news programmes a day.

BBC1: This channel is aimed at a broad audience and typically broadcasts popular British drama, light comedy, consumer programmes, live coverage of National Lottery draws, cookery programmes, sport and films.

BBC2: Programming is intended to be for more specialist audiences and ranges widely from gardening, cookery and home improvement programmes, to innovative comedy and drama, some 'docu-dramas' (documentary dramas) and investigative documentaries, classic science fiction shows, and educational programmes for students on open-learning courses.

ITV (broadcasting on channel 3): ITV is the independent equivalent of BBC1. It often broadcasts dramas, typically detective dramas and murder-mysteries, popular soap operas, game/quiz shows, popular films and some documentaries.

Channel 4: Typical programming includes many American television dramas and comedies, documentaries focusing on other parts of the world or on gritty day-to-day issues, and some edgy alternative comedy.



S4C: Welsh language channel broadcast on Channel 4 in Wales. Specialist Welsh language programmes including soap operas, Welsh news and sport.

Channel 5: A relatively new channel aimed at a younger audience. Programming includes sport (including football, motor sports and American sports), documentaries (often on crime-related topics), American dramas, soap operas, game and chat shows.

In addition, there are dozens of cable and satellite channels that you can subscribe to for an additional fee or in most areas you can buy a small box to connect to your television which will give you free access to more channels. Most of these channels focus on a particular type of programming, such as news, sport coverage, movies or music.

Radio

The BBC, the national broadcaster, offers five radio stations nationally:

- **Radio 1** is a contemporary music station, playing mostly pop music but also other forms such as dance, urban and alternative.
- **Radio 2** offers programming in a range of musical styles, including classic pop, country, folk, rhythm and blues, big band and old favourites – plus conversation, light comedy, chats with celebrities, and informative features.
- **Radio 3** is an arts station, focusing on classical music, experimental drama, readings of literary works, interviews with writers and musicians, and some jazz and world music.
- **Radio 4** broadcasts a wide range of spoken programming, including conversation, news, interviews and discussion programmes, live debates on topical issues, documentary features on a vast range of topics, health advice, gardening advice, quiz shows, comedy, drama, and a popular soap opera.
- **Five Live** focuses on coverage of news and sport, including frequent updates, news analysis, live coverage of sporting events, phone-in debates and features on topical issues.

For radio broadcasting frequencies and programming information, consult a local or national newspaper, a television and radio listings magazine, or the BBC website at www.bbc.co.uk/radio/

In addition to the BBC stations, there are numerous independent commercial radio stations, most of which broadcast mainly one particular type of music (e.g. pop or dance or classical).

8.9 Postal services

Post offices are usually open from 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., Monday to Friday, and from 9.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. on Saturday. You can also buy stamps at newsagents, supermarkets and some other shops, and from special vending machines (usually located near a post office).



Four ways to send a letter

Mail is now priced depending on size as well as weight, with three distinct size formats: letter; large letter; and packet.

1 First-class post. Current charge is 32p. First-class mail usually arrives next day to UK postal addresses.

2 Second-class post. Current charge is 23p. Second-class mail usually arrives in two to three working days to UK postal addresses.

3 Recorded delivery. Use this for sending important documents. Recorded delivery gives you confirmation that your item has been posted and received.

4 Special delivery. Use this for sending urgent items. Items sent by special delivery are guaranteed to reach any destination in the UK by the next day.

Never send passports or cash through the post, unless you use recorded or special delivery. Instead of cash, send a cheque, postal order or international money order.

Further information

For further details of postal charges and services:

- ask at any post office in the UK
 - telephone the Royal Mail on 08457 740 740
 - go to the Royal Mail website at www.royalmail.com
-

8.10 Water and gas

Drinking water: It is perfectly safe to drink from the mains supply in the UK. In UK homes the mains supply is usually the cold tap in the kitchen. Avoid drinking from taps in bathrooms as they are often supplied from storage tanks and, in public places, do not drink from a tap unless it's labelled 'Drinking water'.

Swimming: As an island nation, the UK has many beaches and a long, continuing tradition of seaside activities. But do check with local authorities before swimming at beaches or in rivers or lakes; pollution levels sometimes rise above the recommended limits.

Gas: Natural gas is widely used in the UK for cooking and heating. If you are not used to gas cookers and heating systems, here are three basic precautions to follow:

- read the safety instructions for each gas-powered item and follow them
- never block ventilation pipes or hatches
- if you smell gas, do not use any form of flame or electrical switch – call the gas emergency service immediately on 0800 111 999.



Safety of electric or gas fires, heaters and/or cookers

- If you have fires, heaters and/or cookers in your accommodation, make sure that they are checked every year by a professional person. If you think any gas fires, heaters or cookers are unsafe, get a carbon monoxide detector, which you can buy in hardware shops and some petrol stations.
- If you live in rented accommodation, ask your landlord or landlady to have cookers, fires and heaters checked. They are required by law to show you the most recent safety certificate.
- Whenever you go out, turn off gas and electrical appliances, such as the cooker, television and iron (but not refrigerator).

8.11 Education

In the UK, all children must be in full-time education from the age of five to the age of 16. If you bring your children to the UK with you and they are in this age range, they can study at a UK state school free of charge.

If your children are older than 16 and they want to continue their education, they may have to attend an independent school. Independent schools charge fees to all students.

Your spouse or civil partner can study full time or part time. The rules regarding overseas and home fees (see chapter 6 – *Financial and legal matters* – section 6.1) apply to your spouse/civil partner as well.

8.12 Services and access for disabled people

If you have a disability of any kind, contact your college or university to find out what facilities may be available to you. Institutions now have certain legal obligations towards students under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. For further advice, contact one of the organisations under Further information below.

Many modern buildings in the UK have wheelchair ramps and lifts, and are fully accessible to disabled people. Older buildings are sometimes more difficult, so when you are planning a visit to a place you haven't been before, telephone in advance and ask about the access arrangements.

If you are disabled and you drive a car, you can apply for a badge entitling you to free parking. On public transport, some trains have facilities for wheelchair-users, and some taxis are specially converted to take wheelchairs. Buses and the London Underground are more difficult for wheelchair-users. Again, check what sort of transport is available before you begin a journey. London Transport will give details of accessible journeys.

If you would like to get out and visit other parts of the UK while you are here, one helpful option is to travel on a specially arranged holiday. Some tour operators and organisations organise trips and holidays for disabled people, choosing destinations and transport that meet your access needs. Contact RADAR or SKILL for details.



Further information

RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation), 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF, telephone +44 (0)20 7250 3222, fax +44 (0)20 7250 0212, www.radar.org.uk

SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, Chapter House, 18–20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW, telephone +44 (0)20 7450 0620 (information and advice are available in the UK between 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. Tuesdays and 1.30 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. Thursdays: 0800 328 5050), fax +44 (0)20 7450 0650, www.skill.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission, DRC Helpline, Freepost, MID02164, Stratford upon Avon CV37 9BR, telephone +44 (0)8457 622 633, fax +44 (0)8457 778 878 www.drc-gb.org

Disability Law Service, 39–45 Cavell Street, London E1 2BP, telephone +44 (0)20 7791 9800, fax +44 (0)20 7791 9802, www.dls.org.uk

8.13 Libraries

Your college or university will have its own library, but the local public library can be a useful resource as well. You can:

- use it as a place to read and study
- borrow books, videos and CDs
- access the internet using the library's public computer terminals
- find information on local history, services (including lists of local doctors) and social events.

You can walk into a public library and study or read any books without restriction, but if you want to borrow any of the materials or use the computer terminals, you will have to join. Joining is free – all you have to do is complete a form and provide proof of your address (e.g. a letter from your institution or a utility bill that displays your UK accommodation address).

8.14 Further reading

UpCLOSE Great Britain, Fodor, 2000

A–Z: A Guide to Living in London, International Students House in association with the London Conference on Overseas Students (LCOS), annual, free to LCOS members

The Student Book, Trotman & Co Ltd, annual

The Time Out Student Guide, Time Out Magazine Ltd, annual

Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour by Kate Fox, Hodder & Stoughton, 2005

UK factfile

How much do you know about the country you are going to be living in? Can you name the Prime Minister? Do you know when the major holidays are? Are you familiar with Greenwich Mean Time and British Summer Time? Here's a factual introduction to the UK.

In this chapter:

- 9.1 **Geography** – the four distinct parts of the UK
- 9.2 **People** – their origins, languages and beliefs
- 9.3 **Government and politics** – who runs the UK and how
- 9.4 **Climate and weather** – typical temperatures and daily daylight
- 9.5 **Holidays** – important dates in your UK calendar
- 9.6 **Travel opportunities** – find out where to go and how to get there
- 9.7 **Further reading**





9.1 Geography

The UK – United Kingdom – consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Great Britain comprises England, Scotland and Wales. See the UK map on page 165.

- England is the largest country of the UK, with some 50 million people. It is mainly a lowland country, with some upland areas in the north and west. Major cities include London (about 7.1 million people), Birmingham (about 1.0 million) and Manchester (about 430,000). The economy is increasingly service-based, and London is one of the world's leading centres for banking, insurance and other financial services. High-tech industries have replaced many of the more traditional ones.
- In Scotland, a mere 5.1 million people live in an area not much smaller than England. The country boasts vast open spaces and is one of the last areas of unspoiled natural beauty in Europe, featuring mountains, lochs (lakes) and glens (valleys). Global enterprises including microelectronics and biotechnology, as well as fishing and forestry, drive Scotland's economy. The largest cities are Glasgow (about 578,000 people) and Edinburgh (about 450,000).
- Wales is home to three million people, and its geography is characterised by coastline, mountains and lakes. Cardiff is the largest city, with over 300,000 people. Key growth industries in Wales include electronics, auto components, food processing, health care, and financial and professional services. More Japanese companies have set up shop in Wales than anywhere else in Europe.
- About 1.7 million people live in Northern Ireland, and of these about 280,000 live in Belfast, the largest city. Residents of Northern Ireland enjoy beautiful countryside and a lower cost of living than those on the mainland. Many new hotels are springing up to cater for increasing numbers of tourists and business travellers.

9.2 People

You may be surprised to discover how ethnically diverse British society is, especially in the cities. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, many thousands of people emigrated to the UK from the Caribbean, the South Asian sub-continent, Uganda and South-East Asia. Ethnic minority groups now represent about eight per cent of the British population, including:

- over 1 million people of Caribbean or African descent
- over 1 million people of Indian descent
- over 1 million people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent.

In addition, there are significant numbers of people from China, Italy, Cyprus, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada living in the UK.

Languages

The most widely spoken Asian language in the UK is Punjabi, followed by Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati. The main Chinese dialects spoken in the UK are Cantonese and Mandarin.



Celtic languages were once widely spoken in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and some parts of England. Three of these languages are still spoken in some areas:

- more than 500,000 people in Wales speak Welsh, and some radio and television programmes are broadcast in Welsh
- Gaelic is spoken by about 70,000 people in Scotland, mostly in the islands of the Hebrides off the west coast.
- in Northern Ireland, about 142,000 people speak Irish Gaelic.

Religious diversity

The UK is nominally a Christian country with over 70 per cent of the population identifying themselves as Christians. The Anglican Church is legally recognised as the official church of the State, and about half of the Christian population consider themselves to be Anglicans. However, only about 1.5 million participate in a church service on a typical Sunday, although the numbers swell considerably at Christmas.

The Roman Catholic Church has an active membership of around 1.8 million. Other denominations that can be found nationwide are the Methodists and Baptists, both of whom are particularly strong in Wales. Scotland has several unique denominations, including the Church of Scotland, and various brands of Presbyterianism.

Everyone in the UK has the right to religious freedom, and, in addition to the various forms of Christianity, many different religions are practised. The largest religious communities include:

- the Muslim community, a population of about 1.6 million
- the Hindu community, about 560,000 people
- the Sikh community, about 350,000 people
- the Jewish community, about 270,000 people.

9.3 Government and politics

The UK is a constitutional monarchy, so the Queen is the official head of state.

But elected governments are responsible for creating the laws of the land.

The UK parliament at Westminster (in London) has two parts:

- the House of Commons
- the House of Lords.

The House of Commons

This is a group of representatives elected by the people of the UK. Each member of the House of Commons has a 'seat' in the House and represents a different district ('constituency') of the UK. Most members belong to a political party. The main parties are the Labour Party, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democratic Party.

The House of Commons must be elected every five years, but the government can hold the general election earlier if it wants to. After each general election, the party that wins the most seats forms the government, and the leader of that party becomes the Prime Minister. The Labour Party is currently in power under Prime Minister Tony Blair, having won three general elections.



The government and individual members of the House of Commons can draft and propose new laws. The House debates the proposed laws, and the members vote on whether or not to pass them.

The House of Lords

Before 1997, most members of the House of Lords inherited their 'seats' (membership) from their fathers instead of being elected. This system was abolished in 1999, and reform of the House of Lords is still continuing. Currently, members are not elected and most are appointed by the government. The House of Lords debates new laws created by the House of Commons, and sometimes introduces laws itself.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have long been governed by the UK Parliament at Westminster. But in 1999, devolved administrations were elected for each of these places. The UK is still a united state, and the UK government still has a wide range of national responsibilities, including the civil service, defence and national security, foreign policy, economic policy, immigration, employment law and social security, among others. But some powers have been passed to the new governments. Here's how it works:

Scotland: The Scottish Parliament can pass its own laws on health, education, economic development, housing, social services, the environment, legal matters, and several other matters. It can also vary the income tax rate a little. The main political parties in Scotland are the Labour Party, the Scottish National Party (SNP), the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democratic Party. The Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party are currently sharing power.

Wales: The National Assembly for Wales does not have primary legislative powers. All legislation affecting Wales is still initiated in London. However, the Assembly can modify this legislation according to the situation in Wales.

The Assembly's responsibilities include education, training, economic development, agriculture, industry, local government, health, social services, housing, environment, tourism, transport and the Welsh language. The Assembly will also set policies and standards for these services, though where education is concerned, apart from Welsh language teaching, the system is the same as for England. The main political parties in Wales are the Labour Party, Plaid Cymru (Welsh for 'Party of Wales'), the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democratic Party. The Labour Party is currently in power, in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

Northern Ireland: The Northern Ireland Assembly can pass laws on health, education, employment, enterprise and investment, the environment, and several other areas. Politics in Northern Ireland is divided between 'unionists', who want to retain strong links with the rest of the UK, and 'nationalists', who want closer ties with the Republic of Ireland in the south. The main unionist political parties are the Ulster Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, and the main nationalist political parties are Sinn Féin (pronounced 'shin fane' – Irish for 'we ourselves'), and the Social Democratic and Labour Party. At time of writing, the Assembly is



suspended, although elections took place at the end of 2003, and negotiations are under way to reinstate it.

9.4 Climate and weather

The climate in the UK is moderate: summers are fairly cool and winters are quite mild. And despite what you might have heard, British weather is not all rain and fog – it is actually more comfortable, more varied and more interesting than that. What you can look forward to in the way of rain, sun, temperature and even daylight depends on where you will be living. Here are some typical figures for London.

Average daily temperatures and monthly rainfall for London

Degrees Celsius (°C)	January	February	March	April	May	June
	3	4	6	8	11	14
Rainfall (mm)	77	72	64	56	57	58
Degrees Celsius (°C)	July	August	September	October	November	December
	17	16	14	11	7	4
Rainfall (mm)	59	62	65	70	78	81

Local variations

Although the UK is quite small geographically, the climate varies from one area to another. In general, the west is wetter and milder than the east, and northern areas are noticeably cooler than southern ones. For example, compare the following temperatures with the London figures in the table above:

Average summer temperatures

- Edinburgh: 13.5°C
- Manchester: 15°C

Average winter temperatures

- Edinburgh: 4°C
- Manchester: 4.5°C

Parts of Scotland often get snow in the winter, whereas you might live in London for several years without seeing a significant snowfall.

Changeable weather

International students who are used to tropical or equatorial climates are often intrigued by the sheer variety of the weather in the UK. Weather in the early spring tends to be especially changeable. You could be treated to rain, snow, thunder and lightning, hail, and glorious spring sunshine – all in the course of a single day.



The best way to cope with these unpredictable changes is to be prepared for anything. Here is how:

- Make a habit of carrying an umbrella. If you buy a collapsible type, it will be small enough to keep in your backpack or book bag, or even in the pocket of your jacket.
- Wear a waterproof, windproof jacket. There are lots of different weatherproof jackets available in the UK, so if you do not already have one, it probably makes sense to wait and buy one when you get here.
- Learn to layer your clothing, especially on the top half of your body. For example, if you wear a cotton shirt underneath a woollen sweater and your weatherproof jacket, you will be able to add or remove layers as the weather changes.
- Wear sturdy, well-made shoes with rubber soles and a good tread – they will stop you from slipping in wet or frosty conditions.

Daylight hours

If you come from a place closer to the equator, you will also notice that the amount of daylight changes from season to season in the UK. The south of England, for example, enjoys about 16 hours of daylight in June and July but only eight hours in December and January. The difference between summer and winter daylight is even greater in Scotland, because it's further from the equator.

To make the most of the long hours of daylight during the summer, the UK switches from Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) to British Summer Time (BST): all clocks are moved ahead one hour. BST applies from the end of March to the end of October.

9.5 Holidays

For a listing of public holidays in the UK (as well as other important dates) see page 117 and the UK calendar on pages 180 and 181.

Christmas

Christmas began as a religious festival. For practising Christians, Christmas Day (25 December) is still important as the festival of the birth of Jesus Christ, and churches hold special services.

But Christmas has also developed into a much wider cultural celebration that everyone can join in if they wish. Many people who never go to church at all still celebrate Christmas, and some people of other faiths do too. Here are some of the main features of Christmas as a cultural celebration:

- people put up Christmas decorations in their homes and workplaces, beginning in mid-December or even earlier
- shops put out seasonal displays – red, green and gold are the traditional colours to use



- people send Christmas cards (special greetings cards) to their friends and family
- there are lots of parties, especially in the middle two weeks of December
- people get together with their families on Christmas Day to exchange gifts (wrapped in special Christmas paper) and eat a special meal.

Both Christmas Day and the following day (26 December – ‘Boxing Day’) are national holidays. There is no public transport on Christmas Day and limited transport on Boxing Day.

New Year

1 January – New Year’s Day – is also a public holiday, but the main celebrations take place the night before. On 31 December (New Year’s Eve) many people go to parties, pubs or nightclubs, or get together with friends or family. Most people stay up late to welcome in the New Year, and it is traditional to have a glass of champagne – or whatever else you prefer – at midnight to celebrate. In Scotland, New Year’s Eve is called ‘Hogmanay’ and is an even more festive occasion than Christmas.

Because Christmas Day and New Year’s Day are only a week apart, most people take a week or so off work. In fact, schools and many businesses shut completely over the Christmas and New Year period. If you are planning to stay on at your college or university during the holidays, check to find out what services and facilities will be available.

Easter

For practising Christians, Easter is as important as Christmas, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Again, there are special church services.

The Easter holiday is a four-day weekend, from Good Friday to Easter Monday. It always falls somewhere between late March and late April, but the exact dates change from year to year because they are linked to the cycle of the moon. See the table below for the current dates.

As with Christmas, there are some cultural traditions with no Christian connotations.

The main ones are:

- gifts of chocolate eggs (Easter eggs)
- Easter egg hunts for children – adults hide Easter eggs in various spots around a room, a house or garden, and the children race to find as many as they can
- Easter parades in many towns.

Guy Fawkes’ Night

In 1605, a man named Guy Fawkes’ was involved in the Gunpowder Plot, a conspiracy to blow up Parliament. The plot failed, and Guy Fawkes’ Night – 5 November – celebrates the fact that Parliament did not blow up. This is not a public holiday, but you will certainly notice when it occurs: it is celebrated with bonfires and fireworks.



Main public holidays

Holiday	2007	2008
New Year's Day	1 January*	1 January*
Good Friday	6 April	21 March
Easter Monday	9 April	24 March
May Day Bank Holiday	7 May	5 May
Late May Bank Holiday	28 May	26 May
August Bank Holiday	27 August	25 August
Christmas Day	25 December*	25 December*
Boxing Day	26 December*	26 December*

*When these dates fall on Saturday or Sunday, the public holiday is the following week.

9.6 Travel opportunities

If, like most international students, you want to take some time to travel around the UK while you are here. There is a lot to see and explore, such as:

- the capital cities of London, Edinburgh (Scotland), Cardiff (Wales) and Belfast (Northern Ireland)
- other major cities, e.g. Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester
- historic cities, e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews, York, and Bath
- famous natural sites, e.g. the white cliffs of Dover in England, the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland and Loch Ness in Scotland
- mountainous scenery in Wales, Scotland, and England's Lake District and Peak District
- miles of coastal paths all around the UK
- hundreds of national parks, historical sites, stately homes and other attractions.

There are also numerous special events and seasonal attractions that are well worth a visit. In January/February, for example, look for Chinese New Year celebrations in London and other cities with large Chinese communities. If you are thinking of going walking in the Welsh border area, go in late May or early June and you could also take in the Hay-on-Wye Festival of Literature.

Travel to London on the August Bank Holiday to join in the revelry at the Notting Hill Carnival, a celebration of Caribbean culture. Or head in the opposite direction, to Edinburgh, in August or September to experience the superb musical and theatrical performances of the renowned Edinburgh International Festival – and the cutting-edge comedy of the Fringe Festival. Then carry on up to Braemar in early September to watch the Highland Games: displays of Scottish Highland dancing and bagpipe-playing together with some very unusual and strenuous athletic events.



For further information about the wealth of sights and sounds awaiting you in the UK:

- read about the range of UK experiences on pages 176 to 179
- check with your students' union to see whether there are any special trips being organised for students
- contact a Tourist Information Centre – there is one in every major town and city; look in the telephone directory, or see the website www.visitbritain.com
- write to one of the tourist boards listed below
- consult a guidebook – see section 9.7 for suggestions.

Further information

VisitBritain, Thames Tower, Black's Road, London W6 9EL, telephone +44 (0)20 8846 9000, fax +44 (0)20 8563 0302, www.visitbritain.com

Visit Scotland, www.visitscotland.com

Wales Tourist Board, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff CF24 0UY, telephone +44 (0)29 2049 9909, fax +44 (0)29 2048 5031, www.visitwales.com

Enjoy England, 1 Regent Street, London SW1Y 4XT, www.enjoyengland.com

Northern Ireland Tourist Board, www.discovernorthernireland.com

Getting around: Because the UK is relatively compact, the national railway network, national coach network and local bus services link most locations (see chapter 5 – *Transport*). In addition to the usual range of ticket options, a variety of special travel passes are available. These can be economical if you want to do quite a lot of travel within a limited time period – for example, unlimited coach travel in Wales over an eight-day period.

For further information:

- see the websites and contact details given in chapter 5 (*Transport*) for rail and coach travel
- speak to a travel agent
- contact a major rail station.

A word of advice: hitchhiking is legal in the UK, but it is a risky way to travel and we recommend you avoid it. If you must hitchhike, then never hitchhike alone – take a friend with you. As a precaution, leave details of your destination and itinerary with a friend or someone at your institution.

Travel accommodation: The following are all fairly inexpensive places to stay when you are travelling around the UK:

- **Youth hostels.** Good value for money, although the facilities can be fairly basic and you usually have to share a room with several other people.
- **Student hostels.** See chapter 4 (*Accommodation*) section 4.3.
- **University and college halls of residence** rooms are often available to tourists during the summer vacation and can be booked direct or through Venuemasters (see contact details below).



- **Bed-and-breakfast** accommodation in private guest houses.
- **Hotels.** Outside the main holiday seasons, many offer cheap weekend stays or even longer breaks.

Further information

Scottish Youth Hostels Association, 7 Glebe Crescent, Stirling FK8 2JA, telephone +44 (0)8701 553255, fax +44 (0)1786 891 336, www.syha.org.uk

Venuemasters, The Workstation, Paternoster Row, Sheffield S1 2BX, telephone +44 (0)114 249 3090, fax +44 (0)114 249 3091, www.venuemasters.com

Youth Hostels Association (YHA) (England and Wales), Trevelyan House, Dimple Road, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3YH, telephone +44 (0)1629 592700, fax +44 (0)1629 592627, www.yha.org.uk

Tourist Boards – see ‘Further information’ on the previous page.

Continental Europe

The UK is a gateway to the rest of Europe. From here it is relatively easy and inexpensive to get to other European countries, whether by plane, by ferry or by train through the Channel Tunnel, and city-to-city journeys are generally quick.

There are many discount air fares for students, and your students’ union should be able to tell you about other special student fares. Ask a travel agent for details of inexpensive package tours.

One popular way of travelling around Europe is with an Inter-Rail card, which entitles you to one month’s travel in 29 countries in eight different rail zones. The current price for travel in all eight zones is £295 if you are under 26 or £405 if you are older. To find out more about Inter-Rail, check out the website at www.raileurope.co.uk

Before you go: If you do decide to leave the UK, remember to look into immigration issues before you go (see chapter 2 – *Entry clearance requirements*).

- 1** Check whether you need visas to enter the countries you want to visit. Allow plenty of time for this and remember that many countries will not issue visas to students who are coming towards the end of their studies.
- 2** You can apply for a ‘Schengen’ visa if you want to visit the following European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. This visa is valid for one trip and will allow you to visit any of these countries for up to three months. Your international student adviser, the welfare officer in your institution or students’ union will give you advice about applying for one.
- 3** Make sure your passport will not expire while you are travelling outside the UK. Apply for a new one if it will. You will need to take both your old and new passport with you when you travel as you will be required to show both of them to the immigration officer when you re-enter the UK.



4 If you are a visa national, and your circumstances have not changed since you got your visa, you will be allowed back in to the UK provided your stay is for more than six months and you are returning before your visa expires (it is advisable to carry evidence with you to prove this). If you do not meet these requirements, you should seek advice before travelling outside the UK if you plan to re-enter after your trip. Your international student adviser, the welfare officer in your institution or the students' union will be able to give you help and advice.

9.7 Further reading

Britain, Lonely Planet Publications, biennial

UK 2005: The Official Yearbook of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Office of National Statistics (ONS), annual

Feeling at Home, British Council

Invitation to Britain, brochure available from VisitBritain offices



Studying in the UK



Depending where you come from, you may find teaching and learning methods in the UK quite different from what you are used to. In fact, even students in the UK are often surprised by the differences between the teaching methods used in schools and those used in colleges and universities.

In this chapter:

- 10.1 **Teaching and learning methods** – make the most of lectures, seminars, tutorials and research
- 10.2 **Organising your time** – how to master the art of time management
- 10.3 **Coping with your course** – three steps to help you handle study stress
- 10.4 **Teaching methods on English language and vocational courses, and in schools**
- 10.5 **Further reading**



10.1 Teaching and learning methods

On degree and postgraduate courses:

- You do not have to attend all your classes all the time, and you have much more time to study on your own. This means that you have to organise your private study time.
- Your instructors/tutors/lecturers will not always provide you with answers – instead, they show you ways to find the answers yourself.
- You will not always be dealing with facts, and there will not always be right and wrong answers. You will need to learn to think about the subject matter and develop your own ideas and opinions.
- Classroom teaching may be much less formal than you may be used to. You will be encouraged to ask questions, join in discussions, and even argue with your tutors.

The teaching and learning methods you are most likely to encounter include:

- lectures
- seminars and tutorials
- research.

Lectures

This is the most formal, traditional teaching method. A lecturer stands at the front of the room and makes a presentation to a large number of students, who listen and take notes.

How to learn from lectures:

- Do go to them. You will probably find that no one checks to make sure you attend lectures, but in spite of that, it is still important to go. If you miss lectures, your work will suffer.
- If possible, read about the topic before the lecture. When you already know something about the subject, you will understand the lecture more fully.
- Do not try to write down everything the lecturer says (except when you are copying down equations or formulae). If you try to write down everything, you will think about the writing instead of the information. It is more effective to listen carefully and make notes of the main ideas, plus any references (sources of further information) you should look for later.
- After the lecture, read through your notes and reorganise them if you need to. Add in any extra details you recall, any related information you have read elsewhere, and your own ideas and opinions.
- If you do have to miss a lecture, borrow someone's notes so that you can catch up on the material.



Seminars and tutorials

Seminars are small discussion groups: a number of students (about 8 to 16) join their lecturer or tutor to discuss a particular topic and exchange ideas. Seminars usually last one to two hours. Unlike lectures, attendance is often obligatory – you have to go to seminars.

How to learn from seminars:

- Be prepared. Read about the topic ahead of time, form your own ideas and opinions, and be ready to discuss them.
- Do not be surprised to hear students arguing with each other, and even with the lecturer. This is normal behaviour in a seminar. Reasoned argument – in which you can support your opinions with evidence – is an important learning method.
- Do not be afraid to join in discussions just because you are worried about your English. The other students will be more interested in your ideas and opinions than in your knowledge of English grammar.
- Sometimes you may have to prepare a paper in advance (either on your own or with another student) and then present it to the rest of the group for discussion. Do not be alarmed – this will probably be a new experience for everyone. Relax, and remember why you are there: to learn about the topic.

Tutorials

Tutorials usually take place weekly and last about an hour. You meet with a lecturer or tutor, either on your own or with one to three other students, to:

- discuss your own work (e.g. an essay you are writing)
- cover a particular topic in greater depth.

At some colleges you may also have a 'personal tutor' whose job is to offer advice and suggestions about your work, your study methods, or other aspects of your academic life.


Research

If you are on a postgraduate research programme (see chapter 11 – *Study options* – section 11.6), you will spend little or no time in lectures, seminars and tutorials. Instead, most of your time will be spent on independent research.

The main stages:

You will start by meeting with your supervisor and agreeing on a specific direction for your research.

- Next, you may need to do some background reading to become more familiar with the subject. This sometimes takes several months. On some research programmes you may also have to take a couple of taught courses at the beginning, either to learn about the subject or to learn about research methods.
- The bulk of the programme is your research. In scientific fields, you will probably need to design and carry out extensive experiments. Research in other fields may involve various activities such as critical reading and analysis, interviewing people, designing and conducting surveys, or developing computer programs.

- 
- When your research is complete, you write a dissertation (an extended essay) about it. A typical dissertation should explain what you set out to learn and why, how you conducted your research, what you discovered through your research, and what conclusions you have reached. This stage can take several months for a Master's degree, or a year or so for a doctorate.

Throughout the process, you should have regular meetings with your supervisor. He or she will want to know how you are progressing, and can offer guidance and suggestions on your research and your dissertation.

10.2 Organising your time

When you have worked out your timetable of research or of lectures, seminars and tutorials, you may be surprised to find that you have quite a lot of 'free' time. Take control of this time and organise it carefully. Time that is not organised can disappear very quickly, leaving you rushing to catch up on your work or even running out of time altogether. Learn the essentials of time management:

- Make weekly or monthly plans that set out your study/research targets for the week or month ahead. Schedule time for doing your reading, and work out roughly how much you want to read in each session. Plan time to research and write your essays or prepare projects, so that you do not have to stay up late doing them at the last minute.
- Do not plan to spend all your extra time studying, though – remember to leave some time free for hobbies, sports, seeing friends or simply relaxing. If you do not take time to enjoy yourself, your work will suffer and you will miss out on many worthwhile experiences while you are in the UK. Make a timetable for your free time, if you like: plan when to see your friends, play your favourite sport, or just hang out.
- Revise your plans if you need to. As you progress through your course, you will get a better idea of how much time you need for different activities. Use this information to adjust your schedules and keep them realistic.

10.3 Coping with your course

Living and working in a new environment can make studying more challenging than usual. After your initial excitement about starting your new course wears off, you may start to worry about your progress, or about how you will cope with examinations. These concerns are natural, but do not let them overwhelm you. Here are three simple steps you can take to stay in control of your studies.

1 Ask for regular meetings with your tutor or supervisor to review your progress and discuss any problems. If you are having language difficulties, for example, your tutor can suggest solutions – perhaps there is a language centre at your college or university where you can use language-learning materials, or there may be a programme of English classes for international students.

2 Form a mutual support group with other international students to discuss common challenges and share useful ideas. This can be particularly helpful if



you find the teaching methods very different from those you have experienced before. Another type of support group could be other students in your subject area – get together with students on similar courses to discuss the issues, swap ideas and give each other support.

3 Ask your student counsellor and the academic staff in your department for support and advice. Sometimes students feel overwhelmed because they set themselves unrealistic goals. Talking to the academic staff and the student counsellor can help you take a more realistic approach and put your problems into perspective.

Just remember that whatever concerns you may have – about new learning methods, managing your time, or handling your workload – there is someone at your college or university who can help. All you have to do is ask. If you do feel you are having difficulties meeting a deadline, speak to your supervisor or tutor about it. They will often be sympathetic to the circumstances and may be able to help in offering advice or a practical solution.

10.4 Non-degree courses

English language courses

English language courses are offered at all levels from beginner to advanced, and are designed for all ages from juniors to adults. Some courses prepare students for study in various specialised areas such as medicine, the law or business. The teaching style is mainly practical – you will be encouraged to communicate from the moment you enter the classroom. You will immerse yourself in the language, rather than just studying it: you will play games, solve problems and have discussions while learning English.

GCSEs, A-levels and other equivalents

GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are normally studied between the ages of 14 and 16 and are part of compulsory education in the UK. Students normally take around ten subjects which are assessed (depending on the subject) by a combination of coursework and exam.

A-Level (Advanced level) exams are usually taken between the ages of 16 and 18. Students normally take between two and five A-Levels which are the entrance requirement for university degrees. Each course (again depending on the subject) is assessed by either coursework, exam or a combination of the two.

A-Levels and GCSEs are available in state and private schools and in many further education (FE colleges) and sixth-form colleges for young people and adults.

The International Baccalaureate is becoming more widely accepted as an entrance qualification in UK universities. It offers several programmes from primary age to the Diploma course, which is the university entrance qualification. The exams are available in many private schools and some state schools.



Career-based courses

Students studying career-based (sometimes known as 'vocational') courses are encouraged to take responsibility for their own study, with extensive support from tutors and lecturers. Students work on projects with other students, spend time in college libraries, and are assessed through practical demonstrations. They learn through an experience that combines practical skills with an underpinning of knowledge, all relevant to a particular career or occupation.

10.5 Further reading

Learn How to Study: A Guide for Students of All Ages, D. Rowntree, Warner, 1991, £6.99

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *Study methods used in the UK* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922, www.ukcosa.org.uk)



Study options

At this stage, your main aim may be to complete an undergraduate degree or postgraduate programme at a UK university or college. But it is worth knowing the full range of options available to you, in

case you are considering further study for you (or your family), your study plans change, or to see where your qualification fits into the UK system.

Check out the table in section 11.8 as a first step; you can get more detailed information on courses from www.educationuk.org, or by using the comprehensive Guide to UK education, published by the British Council. Remember: whatever your educational needs, the UK can meet them.



In this chapter:

- 11.1 **Reviewing the options** – an overview of the complete range of study options available
- 11.2 **The home of English** – language skills will improve study success
- 11.3 **GCSEs, A-levels and other equivalents**
- 11.4 **Work-based courses**
- 11.5 **Understanding degrees** – how they are taught, how they are graded, and how to get on to a course
- 11.6 **Postgraduate prestige** – master your subject and become an expert in your field
- 11.7 **Boost your career with an MBA**
- 11.8 **Your education options in the UK**
- 11.9 **Further reading**



11.1 Reviewing the options

As you have probably discovered already, the breadth and flexibility of the UK education system are exceptional. The UK boasts over 3,000 educational institutions that welcome international students at various levels, offering many thousands of different courses. There are a variety of routes through the education and training system, combining different types of course according to your needs and abilities.

Further information

An excellent starting point for exploring your study opportunities can be found at www.educationuk.org

Schools, colleges and universities

What is an FE institution? What is an HE institution? What is the difference between a college and a university? Here is an overview of UK educational institutions.

State schools: The majority of the UK population attend free schools run within a state system between the ages of five and 18, studying up to GCSE and A-level (in Scotland – Standard Grades and National Qualifications at five levels: Access, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher). If you are resident in the UK and your children are of school age (i.e. from five to 16 years old) they will also be able to study at a state school free of charge. Indeed, your children will be required by law to study full-time while in the UK.

Boarding schools: These schools provide education up to the age of 18 (also called primary and secondary education) to British and international students. Students live at the school and pay fees to attend.

Colleges: Tutorial colleges specialise in helping students improve their qualifications, especially for admission to a career-based or degree course. Tutorial colleges offer English language programmes, education up to the age of 18 (such as GCSEs, A-levels and other equivalents), career-based courses and access courses (for admission to degree programmes).

Private language schools: These schools specialise in teaching English. Three hundred and eighty-seven schools, colleges and universities are accredited by the British Council and about 240 of these are private schools. Some private schools are contracted to prepare students for the academic courses at colleges and universities.

FE (further education) institutions: These institutions offer a very diverse range of programmes, such as English language programmes, education up to the age of 18, career-based courses, access courses for admission to degree programmes, degree and some postgraduate programmes. Some are state-funded and others are independent. FE institutions include:

- sixth-form colleges
- colleges of further education
- tertiary colleges



- colleges of art and design
- colleges of commerce
- colleges of technology
- specialist colleges
- colleges of further and higher education.

HE (higher education) institutions: The first universities were founded some 800 years ago, so HE institutions draw on an exceptional depth of educational experience. HE qualifications include degrees, foundation degrees (in England only), Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and postgraduate qualifications. Some HE institutions also offer access courses for admission to degree programmes. HE institutions include:

- universities
- university-sector colleges
- colleges of higher education
- institutes of higher education.

Application requirements

To check how your own qualifications compare with British qualifications, contact your local British Council office or write to the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC). Each individual college and university makes its own decisions about which international qualifications to accept, but checking with the British Council or NARIC can give you a general idea of what to expect.

Further information

UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC), Oriel House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1XP, telephone +44 (0)870 990 4088, fax +44 (0)870 990 1950, e-mail info@naric.org.uk www.naric.org.uk

11.2 The home of English

In today's world, English language is a must. It is used in everything from business, science and the internet to arts, culture and the media. More than 1.4 billion people (one-quarter of the world's population) live in countries where English is an official language and many large, international organisations expect employees to have a good level of English. An English language course or qualification will help you take your first steps towards studying for a vocational education, a degree or postgraduate qualification at one of the UK's colleges or universities. It will also be a powerful tool for hundreds of careers, from creating business opportunities in international markets to writing computer programmes and teaching in your community. Although most people learn some English in their home country, more and more are choosing to study in an English-speaking country. They want to be surrounded by the language all the time – not just in the classroom. And there is no better place to learn English and improve your language skills than in the UK.



More than 600,000 people travel to the UK every year to study English. The UK offers more English courses than anywhere else in the world and there are courses to suit students of every age, level of English and interest. Students who come to the UK to learn English for its own sake are attracted by the modern teaching methods and the huge choice of courses available. Others come to the UK to gain the special language skills needed for studies or work. As a student in the UK, you will be adding to your knowledge and experience every time you visit the shops or go to the cinema, café or a restaurant. English will be your language of communication with friends from the UK and other countries and you may have the chance to live with a local family. You will also have the opportunity to discover the rich culture and history that make the UK an interesting and inspiring place in which to live and learn. You can also be certain that if you choose a centre that is accredited by the British Council, the service you receive will meet agreed quality standards. The British Council inspects and accredits more than 390 English language providers in English in Britain Accreditation Scheme. This is a guarantee of the academic excellence for which the UK is known.

What can I study?

There are nine main types of English language course on offer in the UK: general English courses; exam preparation courses; English for academic purposes; pre-university entrance English courses; English for specific purposes; vacation courses; teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL); English plus courses; and English for young learners (for students under 18). The exams are administered by several different examination boards and awarding bodies, many of which have British Council approval.

When you choose your course, it is also important for you to check that the course provider is registered with the government; if it is not, you will not be granted a visa to come to the UK. You can check this at www.dfes.gov.uk/providersregister

General and intensive English courses

These are designed for people with an interest in learning English for work and everyday life. Courses cover a broad range of topics and a variety of day-to-day situations such as shopping, booking airline tickets and ordering meals in restaurants. You will be encouraged to speak during lessons through role-play, games and discussions. Grammar and vocabulary sessions to facilitate these role-plays are taught in a variety of exciting and stimulating ways.

English for academic purposes (EAP)

You should choose this type of course if you intend to go on to study an academic subject at a UK college or university. As a student in the UK, you may be expected to carry out research and will certainly be expected to study without supervision for some of the time. For this, you will need advanced reading and writing skills in English, and the ability to digest information quickly. EAP courses focus on areas such as writing essays, taking lecture notes, reading and summarising articles,



talking about statistics and giving presentations. This will help you prepare for academic study in the UK so that you get the most out of your chosen course. EAP courses are usually taken in advance of your academic course. In addition to the time it will take you to complete the training, you will need to allow time to have your language level formally assessed before you can be accepted on to your academic programme.

Pre-university entrance English courses

These are similar to EAP courses but are designed to prepare you for the first term of your main subject-specific course. If your English language skills are below a certain level, the university or college may request that you attend its own pre-university English course in order for you to be admitted to your main course of study. Formal tests can help to determine your level of English and provide an accurate assessment of your abilities before you start your studies. The two main ones are IELTS, which is offered at British Council offices and other testing centres worldwide, and TOEFL, which is an American equivalent offered monthly at testing centres across the world. Both are accepted by UK institutions.

A grade of 5.5 to 7.0 in IELTS or 550 to 650 in TOEFL (213 to 250 computer based) is sufficient for admission to most UK institutions. You may be admitted even if you did not achieve the IELTS/TOEFL standards, on condition that you attend and successfully complete additional pre-sessional English language training in the UK. Once you have reached an adequate level of English to start your course, you may be able to take additional English language lessons at the institution where you are studying. These are often free.

English for specific purposes (ESP)

ESP courses cover the specialised language and vocabulary needed for a wide variety of careers and occupations. Students who already have some English language skills but who need specialised training for study or career purposes usually take these courses. The emphasis is on developing skills needed in professional settings, such as making telephone calls, writing reports, giving presentations and negotiating and using complex technical language. You can take ESP courses that focus on art, banking and finance, computing, electronics, engineering, fashion, air traffic control, international trade, management, marketing and public relations, medicine, office work, science and technology, teaching and tourism. Many more executive courses are aimed at business people who usually want to meet specific learning objectives in a short space of time, and can be tailored to small groups or to one-to-one teaching.

Exam preparation courses

If you want to sit a particular exam at the end of your studies you will need to find out when it is offered before you decide on a course. Some exams may only be offered in June and December so you would need to choose a course that runs either from April to June or from October to December. Other exams, such as IELTS (for entry on to degree-level courses), are offered more frequently, giving you



greater flexibility in choosing when to study. The certificate you receive if you are successful will be useful for employment and education purposes around the world.

Vacation courses

These short courses usually run either in March and April or July and August. They can easily be combined with a holiday in the UK.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

These courses are for people who want to teach English to non-native speakers. A TEFL/TESOL qualification equips you to teach English as a foreign language in the UK or abroad. TEFL and TESOL courses are intended to be challenging and highly stimulating. At certificate or diploma level they will give you practical experience in teaching English successfully and in a way that is enjoyable for your students. The practice lessons that you teach along with your written assignments are assessed throughout the course. Before you join a course, make sure that the TEFL or TESOL qualification is validated by a reputable examining body as teacher training courses leading to certification, unlike the other courses mentioned above, are not included in the scope of a British Council inspection.

English Plus courses

These courses combine general English with vocabulary and grammar for specific vocational purposes, such as health terminology for prospective nurses.

English for Young Learners

These courses are aimed at students aged from five to 17.

For more detailed information see the English in the UK guide, available from your local British Council office, or visit www.educationuk.org/english

Web links

Education UK www.educationuk.org/english

BBC World Service Learning English
www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish

English UK www.englishuk.org.uk or <http://englishuk.com>

International English Language Testing System www.ielts.org

LearnEnglish www.learnenglish.org.uk

Quality assurance www.britishcouncil.org/accreditation

English language www.educationuk.org www.educationuk.org



11.3 GCSEs, A-levels and other equivalents

There are a number of recognised qualifications for which you can study in the UK. The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the International GCSE (IGCSE) or Scottish Standard Grade are normally taken at the age of 16. Following these, students can do one further year of academic study before taking Advanced Subsidiary examinations (AS-levels) or Scottish Highers (in Scotland). After another year of study, they can take Advanced-level examinations (A-levels), Scottish Advanced Highers or, in some cases, the International Baccalaureate (IB). Alternatively, there are work-based qualifications, such as General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) or vocational A-levels, which can be taken after one or two years of study. All these courses give access to university. You can study GCSEs, A-levels and other equivalents at: boarding schools, colleges and FE institutions (see section 11.1).

11.4 Work-based courses

Work-based training in the UK – often known as vocational training – is about teaching you the things you need to know to pursue the career you want to follow. It offers practical courses delivered in a college environment, some leading to entry to degree courses and others enjoying the status of professional qualifications in their own right. The UK offers some of the world’s most widely recognised work-based qualifications in such core subjects as business studies, computing, engineering, and art and design, not forgetting options like hotel and catering, tourism, fashion design, photography, sound technology, film production, and advertising.


You can study work-based courses at: colleges, FE institutions and HE institutions.

11.5 Understanding degrees

Degrees (also called undergraduate or first degrees) are now required for entry into a wide range of careers in the UK and other countries. Most undergraduate programmes in the UK lead to Bachelor’s degrees, such as the BA (Bachelor of Arts), BEng (Bachelor of Engineering) and BSc (Bachelor of Science). A few lead to a Master’s qualification instead, e.g. the MEng (Master of Engineering), especially in Scotland.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, most honours degrees take just three years to complete; ‘sandwich’ degrees (involving a period of work experience) usually take four years; while some professional degrees take longer (e.g. five years for medicine or dentistry). Scottish honours degrees usually take four years.

Your performance will probably be evaluated by a combination of continuous assessment (based on coursework, projects, seminar participation, continuing exams, etc.), a final dissertation and final exams. At the end of your course, your degree will be graded to reflect your overall achievement. The possible grades are:

- 
- first-class honours (a first)
 - upper second-class honours (a 2.1/2.i)
 - lower second-class honours (a 2.2/2.ii)
 - third-class honours (a third)
 - ordinary.

Meeting the entrance requirements

The standard entrance requirements for higher education institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are two or three GCE A-levels together with GCSEs, or the equivalent. For institutions in Scotland, the standard is four or five Higher passes or the equivalent. Institutions may request additional qualifications if they wish, but these are the basic ones. At all institutions you will also need to demonstrate proficiency in English (e.g. by a good score on the IELTS test) if it is not your first language.

Flexible access routes

If you do not currently meet the standard entrance requirements outlined above, do not worry. Instead of entering a degree course directly, you can start your studies in the UK with a foundation programme, and many work-based courses also offer pathways through to degree-level study.

Foundation programmes (also known as access courses), bridge the gap between the qualifications you have and those you need to enter on to an undergraduate degree course in the UK. Many FE colleges, sixth-form colleges, and HE institutions, including universities, run these programmes. Some FE and sixth-form colleges are affiliated to specific UK universities and so their foundation programmes are often designed to prepare you for progression on to degree course primarily at the linked university.

Entry qualifications for foundation programmes vary throughout the UK. Usually international students should have successfully completed at least 12 years of education in either their home country or in the UK. These programmes are usually one academic year long (between 30 and 34 weeks) and start in September but in some cases a six-month, fast-track, intensive option is available, which will usually start in January. English language is often included in any international foundation programme and may be assessed by completing coursework and/or taking an exam.

In Scotland there is a tailor-made course called the International Foundation Programme Scotland (IFPS), which can be nine, 12 or 15 months. This includes an intensive English language course with a final exam which is recognised, within Scotland, for entry to university degree courses.

English language requirements

If English is not your first language, your college or university will want to see proof that your language skills are strong enough to get you through the course. Remember: different institutions – and even different courses – have different requirements, but usually they accept any one of the following:



- the British Council's IELTS test (International English Language Testing System) usually with a minimum score of six
- the Cambridge (UCLES) Certificate of Proficiency in English at grade C or above
- the Cambridge (UCLES) Certificate of Advanced English at grade C or above
- English language O-level or GCSE
- NEAB (Northern Examination and Assessment Board) test in English for overseas students at grade three or above and a Pass grade in the NEAB test in English for speakers of other languages
- the American Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a score of 550 or above.

If you have not yet taken one of these tests, ask your local British Council office where and when you can take them.

The application process

To apply for full-time degree courses, foundation degree courses (England only), HNDs and Diploma of Higher Education courses, you simply make a single approach through the centralised admissions process. This service is provided by UCAS (the Universities and Colleges Admissions System). All UK universities (except the Open University), most colleges and institutes of higher education, and FE institutions that offer HE courses, are members of UCAS. For 2007 year of entry 327 institutions will recruit to all their eligible undergraduate provision through the UCAS service. The UCAS scheme covers the recruitment of UK, other EU and international students for all points of entry (i.e. including admission with credit) to undergraduate-level programmes. You may apply for up to six institutions on a single UCAS application form. UCAS now strongly encourages online application through its 'Apply' service at wwwucas.com/apply/index.html

This service is available either through a 'managed centre' (e.g. schools, colleges, educational agents, etc. who are registered with UCAS) or through a 'student login' gateway for individual applications. Many British Council offices provide access to the internet for application via the 'student login' gateway.

Before applying, all international students should check the minimum entry qualifications in their chosen university or college prospectus. The institution may ask for more than these requirements, and any entry requirement will be shown clearly in any offer received.

The current fee for applying through this system is £5 for a single choice and £15 for up to six choices. You can make only one application a year through the UCAS application process. When UCAS receives your application form it will send a copy to each of your chosen institutions. Each institution will consider your application and send its decision to UCAS, which will then be forwarded on to you.

UCAS provides each applicant with a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN) enabling them to monitor the progress of their application and to record choices through its 'Track' service available 24 hours/seven days on the UCAS website.



For each application, three outcomes are possible. You may be sent an unconditional offer where you can take the place at the start of the next academic year. You may be sent a conditional offer where you have to achieve the entry requirements in qualifying examinations. Or the institution will reject your application. If all of your choices are rejected, you will be able to apply to a institution through 'Extra' and 'Clearing'.

'Extra' and 'Clearing' are processes designed to help students who have not been able to find a place through the usual UCAS route. You should not reply to any offers until asked to by UCAS. You can accept no more than two offers. The first choice will be your firm acceptance and the second your insurance acceptance. If your firm acceptance is an unconditional offer you will not be able to hold an insurance offer.

A conditional offer will be confirmed or withdrawn after the university has been notified of the results of your qualifying examinations. If you have not matched the entry requirements for either your firm or conditional offers you can enter the Clearing procedure.

'Extra' operates from mid-March to the end of June. You will be eligible for 'Extra' if: you have used all six of your choices and you have unsuccessful or withdrawal decisions for all your choices; or, you have cancelled your outstanding choices and hold no offers; or, you have received replies back from all six choices and have declined all offers. 'Extra' enables you to have one additional choice and means that you do not have to wait until 'Clearing' to continue to find a place.

If you do not secure a place through 'Extra' you will be able to enter 'Clearing' which operates in August and September. Applicants will also be eligible for 'Clearing' if their application to UCAS was made after 30 June (or 12 June for art and design courses).

Further information

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ, telephone +44 (0)870 112 2211 (applications), +44 (0)1242 222444 (general enquiries), fax +44 (0)1242 544960, www.ucas.com

11.6 Postgraduate prestige

Postgraduate qualifications are among the most challenging – and therefore prestigious – academic programmes available. Postgraduate students in the UK work and learn alongside some of the world's top intellectual achievers – people who have developed original knowledge in their fields – in an environment of vibrant creativity.

There are two broad types of postgraduate programme:

- taught courses
- research degrees.



More detailed information can be found in the *Guide to UK Education*, published by the British Council.

Postgraduate taught courses

These are advanced academic programmes. Some are designed to deepen your knowledge of your undergraduate subject, and others are 'conversion courses' that will introduce you to a new subject and bring you up to speed quickly.

There are two main types of taught course: Master's programmes, which normally consist of classes and seminars plus a dissertation; and diploma or certificate courses, which sometimes consist of the taught elements of a Master's course without the dissertation. Some of these programmes are particularly flexible: you can register initially for the certificate or diploma, and then carry on to the full Master's programme if you do well.

Postgraduate research

A research degree is the ultimate opportunity to pursue your own specialist interest. You initiate and develop your topic under the supervision of an academic (sometimes two academics) who specialises in your chosen field. To be successful, you will need to demonstrate intellectual independence. You will also need well-developed time-management skills and a sense of self-discipline because you will have to set and keep to your own schedule.

Many programmes have links to industry, to ensure their direct relevance to the working world. Courses range from those that present general management principles to highly specialised ones tailored to career fields such as agribusiness, banking and finance, construction, oil and gas, health care, hospitality, transport and technology.

The application process

For the majority of postgraduate programmes, you should apply directly to the college or university. You can apply for as many different programmes as you want. Apply as early as you can: institutions start processing applications up to 18 months before the start of the course.

To apply for admission to a PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate of Education) course, you will need to apply through the GTTR (Graduate Teacher Training Registry) – this is a centralised admissions system, somewhat similar to UCAS (see section 11.5) – or directly to the institution.

Further information

Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR), Rosehill, New Barn Lane, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 3LZ, telephone +44 (0)870 112 2205, fax +44 (0)1242 544961, e-mail enquiries@gtr.ac.uk, www.gtr.ac.uk



11.7 Boost your career with an MBA

Business studies are increasingly popular with students from all countries, and the MBA (Master of Business Administration) is the most popular business qualification. MBA programmes are designed to develop management skills, knowledge, the ability to analyse complex problems and the ability to make strategic decisions. There are hundreds of programmes to choose from in the UK.

Further information

Association of MBAs, 25 Hosier Lane, London EC1A 9LQ, telephone +44 (0)20 7246 2686, fax +44 (0)20 7246 2687, e-mail info@mbaworld.com, www.mbaworld.com

Association of Business Schools, 344–345 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP, telephone +44 (0)20 7837 1899, fax +44 (0)20 7837 8189, e-mail abs@the-abs.org.uk, www.the-abs.org.uk

11.8 Your education options in the UK

What you can study:	English language courses
Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General English courses ● English for Academic Purposes (EAP) ● Pre-university entrance English courses ● English for Specific Purposes (ESP) ● Vacation courses (adults and children) ● Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students of all ages who want to improve their English skills ● Adults who need English training for specific purposes such as research or business
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A range of internationally recognised certificates and diplomas
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private language schools ● Boarding schools ● Colleges ● FE institutions ● HE institutions



What you can study: GCSEs, A-levels and other equivalents – England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General education ● Qualifying exams for courses leading to undergraduate programmes
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students completing their compulsory education (up to age 16) ● Students pursuing qualifying exams for further study
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) ● International GCSE (IGCSE) ● GCSEs in vocational subjects (formerly Part One GNVQ) ● GCE AS-levels and A-levels ● Vocational A-level, also known as Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) (formerly Advanced GNVQ) ● International Baccalaureate (IB)
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Boarding schools ● Colleges ● FE institutions

What you can study: Standard Grades, Highers and Advanced Highers – Scotland

Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General education ● Qualifying exams for courses leading to undergraduate programmes
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students completing their compulsory education (up to age 16) ● Students pursuing qualifying exams for further study
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standard Grades ● Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 ● Highers ● Advanced Highers
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Boarding schools ● Colleges ● FE institutions



What you can study: Work-based courses – England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Practical courses providing work-related skills and experience● Qualifying exams for courses leading to undergraduate exams
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students who want to improve their work-related skills● Students pursuing a career-specific qualification● Students pursuing qualifying exams for further study
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)● General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs); offered at two levels: Foundation and Intermediate● BTEC/Edexcel First Diploma; comparable to GNVQ Intermediate● Vocational A-level, also known as Vocational Certificate of Education (VCE) (formerly Advanced GNVQ) (recognised for entry to undergraduate study)● BTEC/Edexcel National Diploma (recognised for entry to undergraduate study)● BTEC/Edexcel Higher National Diploma (HND)
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Boarding schools● Colleges● FE institutions

What you can study: Work-based courses – Scotland

Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Practical courses providing work-related skills and experience● Qualifying exams for courses leading to undergraduate exams
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students who want to improve their work-related skills● Students pursuing a career-specific qualification● Students pursuing qualifying exams for further study
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs)● Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Boarding schools● Colleges● FE institutions



What you can study:	Degree courses
Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Degree courses leading mainly to Bachelor's degrees; study skills ● Foundation degrees leading either to a job or, after a further year of study, to an honours degree; practical and academic skills ● Access, bridging and foundation courses leading to admission to undergraduate study; emphasis on study skills
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students who want to improve their general or specific career prospects ● Students seeking admission to a particular profession ● Students seeking access to postgraduate study ● For foundation degrees, students who want to improve their skills to a good level while keeping their options open as to whether to pursue a job or a full degree ● For access and foundation courses, students who want to bridge the gap between their current academic level and the entrance requirements for undergraduate study
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Degrees (e.g. BA, BSc), including some Master's degrees (e.g. MEng) ● Foundation degrees (from September 2001 in England) ● Foundation, bridging and access courses leading into undergraduate degrees ● The Scottish International Foundation Programme
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FE institutions ● HE institutions ● Colleges (foundation courses only)



What you can study:	Postgraduate courses
Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taught
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students who want to improve their general or specific career prospects ● Students seeking admission to a particular profession ● Students seeking access to a PhD programme
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's degrees, e.g. MA (Master of Arts), MSc (Master of Science) ● PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) ● PG Cert (Postgraduate Certificate) ● PG Dip (Postgraduate Diploma)
Entrance requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● British or recognised overseas undergraduate degree in a relevant subject plus English language proficiency (e.g. IELTS band 6 or above).
Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examinations and/or continuous assessment ● For a Master's degree, the dissertation is a significant part of the assessment
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's degrees: one year ● Certificates and diplomas: nine months
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HE institutions

What you can study:	Postgraduate courses
Types of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students who want to improve their general or specific career prospects ● Students seeking admission to certain professions ● Students seeking a career in research or academia
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's degrees, e.g. MA (Master of Arts)/MSc (Master of Science) by research, MPhil (Master of Philosophy), MRes. (Master of Research) ● Doctorates, e.g. PhD or DPhil (Doctor of Philosophy)
Entrance requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● British or recognised overseas undergraduate degree in a relevant subject, at 2.1 Honours or above plus English language proficiency (e.g. IELTS band 6 or above) ● Taught or research Master's degree in a relevant subject plus English language proficiency (e.g. IELTS band six or above); an outstanding academic record is expected
Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's degrees: as for doctorates, you will be expected to work on your own to a large extent, under the guidance of a supervisor; a Master's dissertation is typically 30,000–40,000 words long



What you can study:	Postgraduate courses (cont.)
Teaching methods (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Doctorates: you will be expected to work on your own to a large extent, under the guidance of a supervisor. The first two years are spent researching the topic and planning the dissertation. The dissertation is usually written during the third year, and is typically 70,000–100,000 words long
Assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's degrees: dissertation ● Doctorates: dissertation
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master's degrees: one to three years ● Doctorates: at least three years
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HE institutions

What you can study:	MBA programmes
Types of course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MBAs
Who studies them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students who want to improve their general or specific career prospects ● Students seeking admission to certain professions ● Students seeking a career in research or academia
Qualifications offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MBAs: both general and specialised versions are available
Entrance requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● British or recognised overseas undergraduate degree or a professional qualification plus a good GMAT score plus English language proficiency (e.g. IELTS band 6 or above)
Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Projects, practical work and simulations or games are important elements ● Lectures (sometimes involving guest speakers from industry) and seminars are also used
Assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuous assessment, plus dissertation and exams
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Usually one year
Where to study them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HE institutions and specialist management colleges



Further information

For further information, you can find details of your nearest office at www.britishcouncil.org/home-contact-worldwide.htm, which includes links to all our country web pages and a worldwide address book giving contact details for all offices. www.educationuk.org

11.9 Further reading

The following publications are available from British Council offices. *Education UK: Guide to UK Education Undergraduate and Pre-university*, British Council, annual *Education UK: Guide to UK Education Postgraduate and MBA*, British Council, annual *Education UK: The UK Universities, Colleges and Schools Handbook*, British Council, annual, Education Information Sheets (various), British Council (available online www.educationUK.org or www.britishcouncil.org/learning-education-information-sheets)

UKCOSA produces a useful range of Guidance Notes on topics such as immigration, finance and working in the UK. The Guidance Notes can be downloaded from www.ukcosa.org or contact UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922.



Cultural issues



Immersing yourself in a different culture takes courage – it is a brave move. It is also one of the best ways to develop independence and a broader, more international perspective. Here is an introduction to some of the social customs and cultural challenges you may face in the UK.

In this chapter:

- 12.1 **Cultural differences** – the little things you will need to learn
- 12.2 **Living in the UK** – eating, drinking and dating in the UK
- 12.3 **Culture shock** – what it is and what you can do about it
- 12.4 **Personal safety** – ten tips for a safe stay
- 12.5 **Further reading**



12.1 Cultural differences

At home in your own country, there are probably many customs, habits and social rules that you do not even think about – you are so used to them that you take them for granted. Many of these patterns vary from culture to culture, and that is one of the things that makes living in another country so educational. For example, when you first arrive in the UK, you may notice differences in:

- the way people dress
- the behaviour of men and women – towards each other and in general
- expectations about punctuality – how important it is to be on time
- attitudes toward animals – for example, many people share their homes with dogs, cats and other pets
- aspects of religious practice
- food and eating habits
- the climate.

As you settle in to life in the UK, you may see different ways of doing all sorts of things, such as:

- dressing for different types of occasion
- greeting people
- offering, accepting and refusing hospitality
- thanking people
- behaviours regarded as polite in different situations
- expressing your opinion
- relating to members of the opposite sex
- looking after yourself – including everything from running your own UK bank account to preparing your own food, washing your own clothes and making your own bed.

Prepare yourself for any cultural differences by finding out as much as you can about the UK before you come. Read section 12.2 below as a start, and then check out the books listed in section 12.5 for further details.

Explaining your needs

Once you are here, remember that people in the UK may not know as much about cultural differences as you do. If they are not familiar with your culture, they will not understand your needs and concerns unless you explain them. If you are living in lodgings or sharing accommodation with others, you may need to explain:

- which foods you can and cannot eat, and why
- which methods of preparing food are acceptable for you, and why
- why you prefer to eat your main meal at a certain time of the day
- that you need some privacy every day to pray or meditate
- about any other personal needs you may have – e.g. if you prefer to wash under running water instead of taking a bath.

Do remember to explain why you follow these guidelines. People will understand your needs better if they also understand the cultural reasons for them.



Race relations and discrimination

The population of the UK is increasingly diverse, and a great many religions and ethnic groups are represented. British society believes in respecting the rights of all groups in society. This belief is supported by law: the Race Relations Act is one of the most comprehensive laws against racial discrimination in the world. If you think you have been subjected to any form of racial discrimination, report it to the local branch of the Commission for Racial Equality – look them up in the local telephone directory. Your university or institution will also have a formal procedure for those who feel they are being discriminated against.

An individual or ethnic group's rights to their culture, and the right to express it are enshrined in UK law. The laws offer protection against unfair discrimination or prejudice, and are intended to discourage people from holding views or making statements that are of detriment to others.

12.2 Living in the UK

Are you curious about the specific cultural differences you may encounter in the UK? Here is an overview of a few obvious areas:

- meals
- drinking
- smoking
- sexual relationships.

Meals

Breakfast: Breakfast in the UK can include any of the following, alone or in combination:

- toasted bread – toast – often with jam
- cereal with milk
- yogurt and fresh fruit
- a full cooked breakfast – eggs, bacon, sausages, tomatoes, toast
- tea or coffee.

The midday meal: This may be called lunch or dinner, depending where you are and is usually a light meal. A typical lunch might consist of one or two of the following:

- soup
- salad
- sandwiches
- a jacket potato (a large potato baked in its skin, served with a variety of toppings)
- a hamburger and chips
- a slice of pizza.

On Sundays, though, many families have a traditional 'Sunday roast' for their midday meal: a roasted joint of meat served with potatoes and cooked vegetables.



The evening meal: This may be called dinner, supper, or 'tea'. (If someone invites you to their house for a cup of tea, they mean just that. But if they invite you to 'come for tea', they probably mean a meal – especially if they invite you for 5.00 p.m. or later.) This is the main meal of the day, and it is almost always a cooked meal. A few popular options include:

- beef, pork, chicken or fish (often with a sauce for flavouring) with potatoes or rice and vegetables
- a pasta dish such as spaghetti, lasagne or tagliatelle (with or without meat in the sauce) and salad
- curried meat and/or vegetables served with rice.

When it comes to the evening meal, people in the UK are taking an increasingly international approach, adopting an ever-wider range of dishes from around the world.

Meals with friends: If someone invites you to their home for a meal, follow these tips:

- If there are certain foods you cannot eat, let your host know in advance.
- Once you have accepted an invitation, you have made a firm commitment, and it would be rude not to go. But if you find that you really cannot go for some reason, let your host know as soon as possible.
- When you go, take a small gift for your host, such as flowers, a box of chocolates or a bottle of wine.
- Arrive at the agreed time, or up to about ten minutes later.

Drinking

In the UK, it is perfectly acceptable for adults to drink alcohol in moderate amounts. For many British people, drinking is an established part of their social life – 'going out for a drink' is how they relax or spend time with friends. If you go to a party or visit people at home in the evening, your host will probably offer you a drink.

Often a lot of university or college social life can revolve around drinking, especially for undergraduates. Do not be surprised if people arrange to meet in a bar, or if events are held in a pub.

Of course, you are not obliged to drink alcohol if you do not want to – even if you are in a pub or at a party where everyone else is drinking. You can always ask for a non-alcoholic drink instead. If you feel uncomfortable going to places that serve alcohol, explain this to your friends – there are lots of other places where you can meet.

If you do choose to drink, remember that:

- you should never drive a motor vehicle after drinking alcohol – it is dangerous, and the police can impose serious penalties on you
- being drunk in public is not acceptable either, and the police can arrest you for it.



Smoking

Many people in the UK smoke. However, in some ways, smoking is less acceptable here than drinking. From summer 2007, smoking in the UK is banned in all public indoor spaces. This includes pubs, wine bars, restaurants, nightclubs, cinemas and public transport. Smoking is already banned in all London underground stations, and at certain outdoor locations such as football grounds and railway stations. You'll still be allowed to 'light up' (slang for smoking) outdoors, in the home, or places considered to be 'homes', such as hotels, unless otherwise signposted (e.g. a sign stating *No smoking in hotel bars or restaurant areas*).

If you are found to be in breach of UK no-smoking regulations, you could be fined £50.

If in doubt, check for signage or ask someone in authority.

Sexual relationships

In the UK, sexual relationships are generally a matter of personal choice, and many students at colleges and universities will choose to have sexual relationships. If you come from another culture, this approach may be very different from what you are used to. You are free to choose your own behaviour according to your own beliefs, so do not feel pressured.

The legal age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual men and women in the UK is 16 (17 in Northern Ireland). In large cities you can find clubs, pubs and other meeting places for lesbians and gay men. Individual attitudes toward homosexuality vary widely – some people accept it easily and others may not. Many lesbians and gay men choose to be discreet; others are more open about their sexuality.

Before you begin any kind of sexual relationship, make sure you understand how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases. See chapter 7 (*Health*), section 7.8.

12.3 Culture shock

The term 'culture shock' describes the emotional upheaval many people experience when moving from a familiar culture to an unfamiliar one. Here is how culture shock can progress:

- When you first arrive in the UK, you will probably be excited about living in another country, meeting new people and starting your course. Everything will seem new and fascinating.
- After this initial enthusiasm wears off, all the new experiences may begin to overwhelm you. Things that you found exciting at first may now seem strange and a little frightening. Even minor differences, such as not being able to buy your usual kind of soap, can add to the sense of strangeness.
- You may experience sudden mood changes and strong reactions, feeling lost, disoriented, and even irritated and resentful.
- Above all, you may wish you were back among the familiar people and places at home.



All international students can experience culture shock in some form – even those coming from countries with seemingly very similar lifestyles to those in the UK. It is important to understand that this reaction is entirely normal – AND that it will pass. Here are some ideas that can help.

What to do about it

● **Arrive early**

If you can arrange it with your institution, it is worth arriving about a week before most other students do, so that you can settle in before things get busy. Many institutions run special induction programmes for international students (especially undergraduates) in the week before term begins. A typical induction programme provides a tour of the college or university, an overview of its facilities and how to use them, help with registering for your academic programme, and social events where you can meet other students and staff. This can help you start to get used to your new environment. The British Council has produced an orientation video for students, *Next steps*, which gives practical advice on adjusting to your new environment.

● **Talk to a counsellor**

The UK welcomes thousands of international students each year, so universities and colleges often employ professional counsellors and international student advisers to help new students adjust. These people have special training in offering advice and support, and they understand the challenges you face. They can listen to you sympathetically, offer practical suggestions, and refer you to other professionals if necessary. Your personal tutor and the staff in the international office or students' union of your college or university can also be helpful.

Some institutions run a 'buddy' or mentoring system – students who have been in the university or college for a longer period give advice to new arrivals, and are available for help and guidance throughout the year. There will be information on schemes such as these in the induction period at the beginning of term, and the students' union or international student association will help you become involved.

● **Keep in touch with home**

Use the telephone, faxes, e-mail and conventional mail to keep in contact with your friends and family at home (see chapter 8, *Services and facilities*). In larger towns or cities with large international communities, you may be able to find newspapers from your own country, or at least in your own language – your college or university may even have some in its own library. You may also be able to find newspapers and other information from your country on the internet. Depending where you are from, you may also be able to watch satellite television programmes from your country.

● **Spend time with other people from your country**

Many international students find that it helps to make contact with people from a similar background because they understand what you are going through. Spending time with people from your country can also be a relaxing break from the 'strangeness' of the UK. You can speak your own language, eat your own foods



and talk about what is going on back home. However, remember that speaking your own language all the time will not help to improve your English language skills.

Many colleges and universities have a variety of national/cultural societies, as well as an active international students' association – ask your students' union for details. The students' union or international students' association may also have information about national or cultural groups outside the institution, in the town or city. Of course, it is important to strike a balance between what is familiar and the new experiences and culture available to you.

- **Keep healthy and active**

Make an effort to exercise regularly if you are able to do so. You will feel better and if you join a sports club or society, it can also be a good way to meet people. Eat a balanced diet and find a shop that sells food from your part of the world, so that you can enjoy familiar meals when you want them.

- **Remember your faith**

If you follow a religion and worship regularly at home, you should continue to do so while you are in the UK as this can provide a sense of stability and be a link to your life at home. Every major religion in the world is represented here, and most large cities have Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist centres, as well as synagogues and churches of all denominations. Ask your international student adviser, chaplaincy or students' union about finding a place of worship in the local area.

- **Remind yourself that culture shock is normal – and temporary**

How long and how much you are affected by culture shock depends on your background and your reactions. However, do remember, at first, it is natural to go through stages of rejecting all that you find – the food, the clothing, the behaviour patterns, the climate, but as time goes on, it is likely that you will gradually re-evaluate all those things and find them more acceptable.

You can also download UKCOSA's Guidance Note *International Students and Culture Shock* from the Advice for International Students area of their website www.ukcosa.org.uk

12.4 Personal safety

The UK is generally a safe place to live. Nevertheless, as in any country, there can be problems in certain areas, so you should take some simple, sensible precautions. Here are ten tips for a safe stay.

- 1 Make a note of all your credit card and bank card numbers and take a photocopy of your passport, particularly the pages that contain your passport number, photograph and any relevant visa stamps. Keep this in a safe place in your accommodation.
- 2 Never carry large amounts of cash. Be careful of your handbag, purse or wallet when you are in crowded places, especially airports, stations and crowded streets.



- 3** If your credit cards, bank cards or passport are stolen, report the theft to the police immediately, and notify your bank. You will need to tell them those numbers that you wrote down in tip 1. You will also need a crime number from the police for any insurance claim or to get a replacement passport.
- 4** Be vigilant when withdrawing cash from an ATM machine; make sure no one is looking over your shoulder at your PIN number.
- 5** Female students in particular should avoid dark and lonely streets and subways. If you are out at night by yourself, try to keep to busy, well-lit areas. Be cautious about speaking to strangers at night. Ideally you should pre-book a taxi to take you home at night. Be wary of accepting lifts from strangers, however friendly.
- 6** If anyone does threaten you and demand your money or other valuables, do not resist – give up your money and valuables. Then report the incident to the police as soon as possible.
- 7** Mobile phone theft is increasing in the UK. Be very vigilant when using your phone in public. It is possible to security mark the battery and phone with your postcode and street number. Contact Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111 to register your phone.
- 8** If you own or hire a car, never leave it unlocked. In addition, either fit an alarm to the car, or use an extra lock that can be fitted to the steering wheel or gear stick. These locks are not expensive, and you can find them at car accessory shops.
- 9** Do not leave anything valuable in the car. If you do have to leave anything in the car, put it in the boot, out of sight.
- 10** Traffic in cities is heavy and drivers can be impatient, so be careful when crossing roads on foot and remember that vehicles drive on the left in the UK so they will be coming towards you from the right. Use a pedestrian crossing if there is one, and look both ways before you cross.
- 11** Remember that drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and heroin are illegal in the UK. Drug sellers and dealers face particularly severe penalties. Avoid getting involved.
- 12** If you need to call the police for help in an emergency, dial 999 and ask for the police service. The call is free from any telephone – you do not need coins or a phone card. This number is for emergencies only. If you need to contact your local police station at any other time, you should dial the number that can be found in the local telephone directory.

Further information

The Home Office website www.good2bsecure.gov.uk contains very useful and helpful information.

Safety first – a personal safety guide for international students is available at www.educationuk.org (click on 'Living in the UK', then 'Health and safety').



12.5 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *International students and culture shock* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. (UK time), Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922, www.ukcosa.org.uk)

UK 2005: The Official Yearbook of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Office of National Statistics (ONS), annual

Feeling at Home, British Council

How to Be a Brit, G. Mikes, Penguin, 1986

UK – The Guide, British Tourist Authority, annual, free

Safety First – a personal safety guide for international students, British Council, 2005

Looking forward

Your course is almost over – what happens next? You are probably happy about going back home, but also sorry that your UK experience is coming to an end. Find out how to prolong your stay in the UK, maintain your links once you leave, carry your experience into your new life back home, and take advantage of opportunities to return to the UK in the future.

In this chapter:

- 13.1 **Staying on to work in the UK** – your options and how to act on them
- 13.2 **Preparing to leave** – saying goodbye and packing up
- 13.3 **Culture shock (again)** – settling into your new old life
- 13.4 **Staying connected** – how to network and maintain your links with the UK
- 13.5 **Coming back** – opportunities to return to the UK
- 13.6 **Further reading**





13.1 Staying on to work in the UK

If you do not want to leave the UK just yet, you might be able to arrange to stay on and work for a while. Working in the UK can provide you with good experience of real work situations, build your knowledge of industry practice, and lead to future contacts and work opportunities in your own country. There are three possibilities:

- 1 If you are an EEA national, you can stay and work freely in the UK.
- 2 Until now, it has not been easy for a majority of non-EEA students to get permission to stay on in the UK after their studies for work (apart from training for a professional or specialist qualification or work experience before returning home). This is changing and there are now a number of schemes that may be of relevance such as the 'Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme' and the 'Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme' (SEGS). For further information about these and other schemes see the UKCOSA Guidance Note 'Working in the UK after your studies' on www.ukcosa.org.uk and check the Home Office website www.workingintheuk.gov.uk

3 If you are a doctor, dentist or nurse, special arrangements have always applied to your professions, and these will continue.

If you want to stay in the UK you must make your application **before** your current permission to be here as a student runs out and usually after you have graduated.

Further information


You can find information about the current position if you click on 'I wish to work in the UK' then on 'Working in the UK' and then on 'work permits' on the Home Office's website: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk

Finding an employer

No matter what kind of work you are looking for in the UK, your first stop should be the careers service at your college or university. You will find a wealth of information about a wide range of careers, plus details about specific employers and listings of job vacancies. Careers advisers can discuss your future career options with you, and can provide concrete advice about job-hunting techniques, including:

- how to find and approach potential employers
- how to prepare a CV (curriculum vitae – a summary of your experience and achievements)
- how to handle yourself at interviews.

Your careers service should also be able to direct you towards information about international employment opportunities. The UK is home to international recruitment fairs, and is also an important centre for international consultants who can assess your potential and introduce you to some of the most successful multinational businesses in the world.



You should also talk to people in your academic department. Your lecturer, tutor or research supervisor may know of organisations (in the UK or overseas) that offer work programmes related to your studies.

13.2 Preparing to leave

When it is time to return home, you will find that leaving the UK will take almost as much planning and organisation as your arrival did. You will have to arrange to get yourself and your belongings back home and to formally end all the day-to-day business relationships you set up when you first arrived.

Saying your goodbyes

To close your business relationships, give advance notice of your departure to:

- your hall of residence or landlord
- the electricity, gas, water and telephone companies, if these bills are in your name
- the Council Tax office, if you pay the tax
- your bank
- your doctor and dentist
- any other medical professionals you've been seeing
- your academic supervisor or other college/university authorities
- your employer, if you have a part-time job
- your local tax office, if you have been working in the UK and paying income tax – you may be entitled to have some of the tax returned to you (to find your local tax office, look in the local telephone directory)
- the local library, if you are a member
- the Child Benefit Office, if applicable.

Check your lease and employment contract to find out how much notice you have to give your landlord and your employer. Give everyone else about a month's notice. Be sure you settle any debts or overdrafts before you leave. Otherwise, your college or university may withhold your qualification, or your UK bank may be able to collect the money from your home bank.

Talk to the student counsellor and academic staff at your institution as well – they will be interested to know your plans, and they might even be able to help you with some of the arrangements for your departure.

Before you leave the UK, give your home address to:

- friends and colleagues, so they can keep in touch
- a responsible person where you're living, so they can forward any post that arrives for you
- your institution's registry and alumni office, so they can keep in touch and send you information (see section 13.4)
- the Post Office, if you wish – they will forward mail to your new address for a fee



- any organisations you belong to
- any publications you subscribe to.

Packing and shipping

If you have been in the UK for very long, you will probably have accumulated quite a few possessions, and you will need to decide which ones you want to take home. Do not leave this until the last minute, because you may have to do some research and you might need time to sell a few things. Here is what to think about:

- Do you have anything that you are not allowed to take back to your country? If so, you will need to sell it or give it away before you leave.
- Will the authorities charge excise tax on any of your goods? If so, think about the value of the goods. If the shipping costs and excise duties would come to more than the cost of replacing the items when you get home, sell them before you leave.
- Find out from your airline what your baggage allowance is, and weigh your packed luggage to see if it is within the limit. If you are faced with excess baggage charges, consider selling things such as books and heavy winter clothing, or sending major items home through a freight company.
- You may be entitled to claim back the VAT you paid on certain goods (e.g. large electrical goods) that you bought in the UK. To do this, you must be taking the goods out of the EU, and you must have bought them no more than three months before your departure. When buying the goods, ask at the shop for Customs form VAT 407. To find out more, visit the HM Customs and Excise website at www.hmce.gov.uk

Further information

To find out about what you are allowed to take home, contact your country's embassy or consulate in the UK.

For further information about claiming back VAT, telephone your local VAT office (look in your local UK *Yellow Pages* telephone directory, or go to www.yell.com).

13.3 Culture shock (again)

Just when you thought you had got over your culture shock in the UK, you arrive home and find yourself going through it all over again! In fact, moving back to your home environment after being away can be more of a culture shock than the UK was. You expect your home to be thoroughly familiar to you, but instead you find you experience it differently. You will re-evaluate your own culture in terms of what you have experienced elsewhere.

Here are some of the surprising differences you may notice when you return home:

- Your friends and family may not share your new attitudes.
- You may have less privacy and independence than you had as a student.



- People may be less interested in hearing about your experiences abroad than you would like. To them, your life in the UK may seem remote and rather irrelevant.
- Other people may be intimidated by your impressive qualifications, or may envy you your opportunities.
- You may feel pressure from your family to be successful in your career, and to show your gratitude for the investment they have made in you.
- At work, you may find routines more rigid and disciplined than you had expected, especially after the freedom of being a student.
- People at work may resist the new ideas and practices you have learned. Your suggestions may seem like major innovations in your home country.
- There may be changes in your group of family and friends – people may have married and had children, some people may have died, some may have moved away and new people may have moved into your circle.
- There may be new political structures or new laws in your country.

The important point to remember is that, just as initial culture shock is an entirely normal reaction, so is 'reverse culture shock'. You may go through the following phases:

- excitement about going home
- rapidly changing emotions as you cope with changes and find out how different reality is from your expectation
- gradual reacceptance of your home culture
- eventually, a broader perspective in which you can appreciate the value and limitations of both the cultures you now know.

Five ways to reduce reverse culture shock

- 1** While you are in the UK, keep in touch with friends and family back home, and with other people from your own country who are in the UK.
- 2** Read newspapers and magazines from your home country so that you know about important news and developments.
- 3** Before you leave, get the addresses of the friends you have made in the UK so you can keep in touch.
- 4** When you get home, give yourself time to readjust to life there – and give your friends and family time to readjust to the new you. The longer you have been away, the more both you and your home environment will have changed.
- 5** Stay in contact with anyone who lives near you and has also studied abroad – sharing experiences will help a great deal. Contact your institution's alumni association and ask them to put you in touch with any former students who live in your area.



13.4 Staying connected

You will recover from reverse culture shock in time, and settle back into life in your home country. But that does not mean you should sever your connections with the UK. Your experience here will have provided you with a network of valuable social, academic and business contacts that you can carry through the rest of your life. And you will probably find that you have developed a lasting fondness for the UK and its culture.

There are a number of ways that you can nurture these relationships:

- through your alumni association
- through international friendship organisations
- through the British Council.

Your alumni association

The alumni association at your college or university – an association for former students – can offer a range of services to keep you feeling connected, including:

- sending you newsletters and mailings to keep you informed about your institution and its staff
- sending you updates on what your fellow students are doing
- putting you in touch with other former students who live in your area, either individually or through alumni groups
- letting you know about reunions and other special events
- putting you in touch with other people in your area who are thinking of studying at your institution, so you can share your experience with them.

International friendship organisations

A number of organisations promote international friendship and opportunities to experience life in the UK with a British family, including the following:

- **HOST**, 1 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS, telephone 44 (0)207 254 3039, fax +44 (0)20 7923 1606, www.hostuk.org
- **UKCOSA**: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone +44 (0)20 7107 9922, fax +44 (0)20 7288 4360, www.ukcosa.org.uk
- **VL (Victoria League) World Friendship**, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG, telephone +44 (0)131 228 5325, www.victorialeague.co.uk



British Council

Once you have got your British qualification and you are back home, it is a good time to get reacquainted with the British Council office in your country. We probably helped you to get started on your UK experience, and now we can help you make the UK a part of your life in your own country. Investigate the many services and facilities the British Council offers, such as:

- a wide range of cultural programmes, e.g. art exhibitions, theatre and music festivals, writing workshops and visiting speakers
- a library and information centre with extensive information about British life and culture
- seminars and conferences on current issues in science, technology, information studies, society, government, and other fields
- help with maintaining and updating your English language skills
- information on upcoming events and holiday opportunities in the UK
- British education exhibitions and information – because whenever you next need to top up your qualifications or continue your lifelong learning, the UK will be able to meet those needs. See the next section for examples.

13.5 Coming back

Your time studying in the UK could be just the start of a rewarding relationship. In an international business world and jobs market, your future career success is likely to be strongly affected by your international knowledge, vision and contacts. As a world centre for finance, multinational companies and global, trend-setting creative and media industries, the UK is your passage to the world stage. Here are a few examples of the many opportunities to further develop your career by coming back to the UK.

Executive development

Multinational and large-scale organisations expect their staff to undergo regular training and development to constantly update and improve their skills and personal qualities. Executive development programmes – intense training courses in practical subjects such as leadership, team-building, presentation skills and strategy-making – are offered by more than 100 business schools in the UK, and usually last between one day and four weeks. These programmes are mostly funded by employers and may be delivered either face-to-face at business schools or within companies, or through distance learning.

Further information

Association of Business Schools, 137 Euston Road, London NW1 2AA, telephone +44 (0)20 7388 0007, fax +44 (0)20 7388 0009, e-mail abs@the-abs.org.uk, www.the-abs.org.uk



Work placement schemes

● **British Overseas Industrial Placement (BOND) Scheme**

The BOND Scheme is a UK Trade and Investment initiative, which provides UK companies with low-cost introductions to potential business partners in leading developing international markets. High-quality professionals, selected through the network of British Council offices overseas, are assigned to UK companies for work attachments for up to 12 months' duration. The flexibility of the scheme ensures that it can be tailored to suit most business needs.

Further information: BOND Scheme Manager, Development Services, British Council, Bridgewater House, 58 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6BB, e-mail bond@britishcouncil.org, www.britishcouncil.org/bond

● **IAESTE Exchange Programme**

This scheme has been running for more than 50 years, setting up training placements for international science and engineering students. IAESTE training placements are available in industrial and commercial organisations, research institutes, local government bodies, state enterprises, consultancies, laboratories and academic institutions. Placements are usually for eight to 12 weeks in the summer months, although longer-term placements are sometimes available.

Further information: IAESTE UK, Education and Training Group, British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN, telephone +44 (0)20 7389 4774, e-mail iaeste@britishcouncil.org, www.iaeste.org.uk

Scottish Networks International (SNI)

Scottish Networks International aims to enhance the educational experience of carefully selected international postgraduate students who have chosen to study in Scotland by developing contacts with companies and organisations in Scotland, which can be continued abroad.

SNI organises a flexible programme of business networking events and seminars, one-to-one company meetings, and cultural and social excursions. SNI can facilitate work-experience placements with companies or organisations in Scotland for some Associates at the end of their studies. Being part of SNI gives Associates membership of the International Business Network which has over 900 alumni in 89 countries around the world.

Further information

Scottish Networks International, British Council Scotland, The Tun (3rd Floor), 4 Jackson's Entry, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8PJ, telephone +44 (0)131 524 5740, fax +44 (0)131 524 5701, e-mail scottishni@britishcouncil.org, www.scottishni.org



13.6 Further reading

UKCOSA Guidance Notes for students: *International students: preparing to return home* (available from your local British Council office or directly from UKCOSA: The Council for International Education, 9–17 St Albans Place, London N1 0NX, telephone advice service available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922, www.ukcosa.org.uk)



Appendices



Other useful addresses and sources of advice

- A **Education and qualifications**
- B **Accommodation, student welfare and other general information**
- C **Student hostels – London area**
- D **Hostels for nationals**
- E **Other hostels in the UK**
- F **Acronyms**



A Education and qualifications

English UK

56 Buckingham Gate
London SW1E 6AG
Telephone +44 (0)20 7802 9200
Fax +44 (0)20 7802 9201
E-mail info@englishuk.com
www.englishuk.com

A professional body for independent English language teaching establishments.

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

Association of Commonwealth Universities
Woburn House
20–24 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HF
Telephone +44 (0)20 7380 6700
Fax +44 (0)20 7387 2655
E-mail info@acu.ac.uk
www.acu.ac.uk

Offers scholarships and fellowships for study and research throughout the Commonwealth to candidates proposed by Commonwealth governments and universities.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
Telephone +44 (0)870 000 2288
E-mail info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
www.dfes.gov.uk
(for international students:
[www.dfes.gov.uk/
international-students/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students/))

Gives advice about student matters, such as fees and grants.

Education UK www.educationuk.org

British Council website offering extensive and detailed information on all educational opportunities in the UK.

The English-Speaking Union (ESU)

Dartmouth House
37 Charles Street
London W1J 5ED
Telephone +44 (0)20 7529 1550
Fax +44 (0)20 7495 6108
E-mail esu@esu.org
www.esu.org.uk

Administers educational awards for students and teachers.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) London Office

12th Floor
Centre Point
103 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1DD
www.hefce.ac.uk
Telephone +44 (0)20 7420 2200
Fax +44 (0)20 7420 2202
www.hefce.ac.uk

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Northavon House
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QD
Telephone +44 (0)117 931 7317
Fax +44 (0)117 931 7203
E-mail hefce@hefce.ac.uk
www.hefce.ac.uk

Funds universities and university-sector colleges and institutes in England, and assesses the quality of their research.

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)

Linden Court
The Orchards
Ilex Close
Llanishen
Cardiff CF14 5DZ
Telephone +44 (0)29 2076 1861
Fax +44 (0)29 2076 3163
E-mail info@hefcw.ac.uk
www.hefcw.ac.uk

Funds universities and university-sector colleges and institutes in Wales, and assesses the quality of their research.

**National Union of Students**

2nd Floor
Centro 3
19 Mandela Street
London NW1 ODU
Telephone +44 (0)871 221 8221
Textphone +(0)20 7561 6577
Fax +44 (0)871 221 8222
www.nusonline.co.uk

Offers practical advice and information on student issues.

Overseas Research Student

Awards Scheme
Universities UK
Woburn House
20 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9HQ
Telephone +44 (0)20 7419 4111
Fax +44 (0)20 7388 8649
E-mail info@universitiesuk.ac.uk
www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/ors

Universities UK administers this scheme on behalf of the DfES.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester GL1 1UB
Telephone +44 (0)1452 557000
Fax +44 (0)1452 557070
E-mail comms@qaa.ac.uk
www.qaa.ac.uk

An independent body that provides an integrated quality assurance service for UK higher education (HE) institutions.

**Scottish Education and Training
British Council Scotland**

The Tun
4 Jackson's Entry
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8PJ
Scotland, UK
Telephone +44 (0)131 524 5730
Fax +44 (0)131 524 5701
E-mail: educationukscotland@britishcouncil.org
www.educationukscotland.org

An initiative involving the British Council to promote Scottish education internationally.

Scottish Funding Council (SFC)

Donaldson House
97 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh EH12 5HD
Telephone +44 (0)131 313 6500
Fax +44 (0)131 313 6501
E-mail info@sfc.ac.uk
www.sfc.ac.uk

Funds HE institutions in Scotland and assesses the quality of their research.

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow G2 8DQ
Telephone 0845 279 1000
Fax +44 (0)141 242 2244
E-mail customer@sqa.org.uk
www.sqa.org.uk

Responsible for accrediting, awarding and developing academic and vocational qualifications in Scotland.

SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Chapter House
18–20 Crucifix Lane
London SE1 3JW
Telephone/minicom
+44 (0)20 7450 0620
Fax +44 (0)20 7450 0650
E-mail skill@skill.org.uk

Information Services
Telephone 0800 328 5050,
+44 (0)20 7657 2337
Minicom 0800 068 2422

Fax +44 (0)20 7450 0650
E-mail info@skill.org.uk
www.skill.org.uk

Provides advice on facilities for students with disabilities.

UK NARIC (The National Recognition Information Centre for the UK)

Oriel House
Oriel Road
Cheltenham GL50 1XP
Telephone 0870 990 4088
Fax 0870 990 1560
E-mail info@naric.org.uk
www.naric.org.uk

Provides advice on overseas qualifications accepted by UK educational institutions. All queries should be sent in writing.

Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS)

Rosehill
New Barn Lane
Cheltenham GL52 3LZ
Telephone +44 (0)870 1122211 (applications)
Telephone +44 (0)1242 222444 (enquiries)
E-mail enquiries@ucas.ac.uk
www.ucas.co.uk

UCAS receives and processes applications for undergraduate admission to all UK universities and university-sector colleges.

B Accommodation, student welfare and other general information

International Students House (ISH)

229 Great Portland Street
London W1W 5PN
Telephone +44 (0)20 7631 8300
Fax +44 (0)20 7631 8307
E-mail info@ish.org.uk
www.ish.org.uk

Club and accommodation centre for international students in London.

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

115 Old Street
London EC1V 9RT
Telephone +44 (0)20 7251 8708
Fax +44 (0)20 7251 8707
E-mail info@jcw.org.uk
www.jcw.org.uk

Gives advice on immigration matters.

The Law Centres Federation

Duchess House
18–19 Warren Street
London W1T 5LR
Telephone +44 (0)20 7387 8570
Fax +44 (0)20 7387 8368
E-mail info@lawcentres.org.uk
www.lawcentres.org.uk

Provides a list of local law centres throughout the UK where free legal advice can be obtained.

YMCA Head Office England

640 Forest Road
London E17 3DZ
Telephone +44 (0)20 8520 5599
www.ymca.org.uk

Gives general information on YMCAs.

The Refugee Council

240–250 Ferndale Road
London SW9 8BB
Telephone +44 (0)20 7346 6700
Fax +44 (0)20 7346 6701
www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Gives help and support to refugees and asylum-seekers arriving and living in the UK.

Refugee Legal Centre

Nelson House
153–157 Commercial Road
London E1 2DA
Telephone +44 (0)20 7780 3200
Fax +44 (0)20 7780 3201
E-mail rlc@refugee-legal-centre.org.uk
www.refugee-legal-centre.org.uk

Provides information and advice about applying for refugee status.

The Terrence Higgins Trust

314–320 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8DP
Telephone +44 (0)20 7812 1600
(helpline +44 (0)845 1221 200)
E-mail info@tht.org.uk
www.tht.org.uk

Gives direct support to people who are at risk of or who are living with HIV.



UKCOSA: The Council for International Education
9–17 St Albans Place
London N1 0NX
Telephone +44 (0)20 7288 4330
Fax +44 (0)20 7288 4360
E-mail: enquiries@ukcosa.org.uk
www.ukcosa.org.uk

A national organisation that looks after the needs and interests of international students. Offers free advice to international students in the UK as well as those considering studying in the UK. A telephone advice service is available 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m., Monday to Friday +44 (0)20 7107 9922.

C Student hostels – London area

M – Men
W – Women
MC – Married couples
Ch – Children
PG Med – postgraduate medical students

Ashwell House (W)
Shepherdess Walk
London N1 7JP
Telephone +44 (0)20 7490 5021
Fax +44 (0)20 7336 6433
E-mail ashwelloffice@btconnect.com
www.ashwellhouse.org.uk

Driscoll House Hotel (M, W, MC)
Elephant & Castle
172 New Kent Road London SE1 4YT
Telephone +44 (0)20 7703 4175
www.driscollhotel.co.uk

Hyelm-Arthur West House (M, W, MC)
79 Fitzjohns Avenue
London NW3 6PA
Telephone +44 (0)20 7435 8793
Fax +44 (0)20 7431 7873
www.hyelm.com

16- to 25-year-olds in London for the first time only. All rooms are single or shared. No mixed rooms.

International Students House (M, W, MC)
229 Great Portland Street
London W1W 5PN
Telephone +44 (0)20 7631 8300
Fax +44 (0)20 7631 8307
E-mail acom@ish.org.uk
www.ish.org.uk

Kingston Churches Housing Association (M, W)
Meadway House
17–21 Brighton Road
Surbiton
Surrey KT6 5LR
Telephone +44 (0)20 8399 7221
Fax +44 (0)20 8399 5282
E-mail office@kcha.co.uk
www.kcha.co.uk

London Conference on Overseas Students (LCOS)
229 Great Portland Street
London W1W 5PN
Telephone +44 (0)20 7631 8309
www.lcos.org.uk

Publishes London student hostels directory and advice.

The London Goodenough Trust for Overseas Graduates (M, W, MC, Ch)
London House Mecklenburgh Square
London WC1N 2AB
Telephone +44 (0)20 7837 8888
Fax +44 (0)20 7837 9321
E-mail admissions@goodenough.ac.uk
www.lgt.org.uk

Provides long- and short-term accommodation to postgraduate students in London.

London Hostels Association Ltd (LHA)
Head Office
54 Eccleston Square
London SW1V 1PG
Telephone +44 (0)20 7834 1545
Fax +44 (0)20 7834 7146
E-mail bookings@london-hostels.co.uk
www.london-hostels.co.uk

The Moullin Hostel (M, W)

24–26 Mount Park Road
Ealing
London W5 2RT
Telephone +44 (0)20 8997 4343
Fax +44 (0)20 8991 0254
www.misw.org.uk/moullin

Netherhall House (M)

Nutley Terrace
Hampstead
London NW3 5SA
Telephone +44 (0)20 7435 8888
Fax +44 (0)20 7472 5721
E-mail director@nh.netherhall.org.uk
www.nh.netherhall.org.uk

**The Victoria League for
Commonwealth Friendship
Students House (M, W, MC)**

55 Leinster Square
London W2 4PW
Telephone +44 (0)20 7229 3961
Fax +44 (0)20 7229 2994
E-mail victorialeague@btconnect.com
www.victorialeague.co.uk

*For Commonwealth students under the
age of 30.*

Women's Link

26 Hanbury Street
Spitalfields
London E1 6QR
Telephone +44 (0)20 7248 1200
Advice line +44 (0)800 652 3167
E-mail advice@womenslink.org.uk
www.womenslink.org.uk

*Offers advice and help with
accommodation in London for low-
income women without children.*

YMCA Croydon (M, W)

Croydon YMCA Housing Association
The Old House
2 Wellesley Court Road
Croydon
Surrey CR0 1LE
Telephone +44 (0)20 8667 9249
Fax +44 (0)20 8667 9250
E-mail admin@croydonymca.org
www.ymca.org.uk

YMCA Waltham Forest (M, W)

642 Forest Road
Walthamstow
London E17 3EF
Telephone +44 (0)20 8520 0931
Fax +44 (0)20 8521 8581
E-mail admin@forestymca.org.uk
www.forestymca.org.uk

**Zebra Housing Association Ltd
(M, W, MC, Ch)**

Jerome House
5–13 Glendower Place
London SW7 3DU
Telephone +44 (0)20 7584 2906
Fax +44 (0)20 7589 3648
E-mail admin@zebrahousing.com
[http://homepages.poptel.org.uk/
zebraha](http://homepages.poptel.org.uk/zebraha)

D Hostels for nationals

Austria**Austrian Catholic Centre (M, W)**

29 Brook Green
London W6 7BL
Telephone/fax +44 (0)20 7603 2697
E-mail acclondon@aol.com

Denmark**The Danish YMCA (M, W)**

43 Maresfield Gardens
Hampstead
London NW3 5TF
Telephone +44 (0)20 7435 7232
Fax +44 (0)20 7431 1394
E-mail k@kfuk.co.uk
www.kfuk.co.uk

*Preference given to Danish men and
women. All shared rooms.*

India**Indian Students Hostel (YMCA)**

41 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 6AQ
Telephone +44 (0)20 7387 0411
Fax +44 (0)20 7383 7651, 4735
E-mail indianymca@aol.com
www.indianymca.org

Takes men and women of all nationalities.



Poland

Polish YMCA

20 Gunnersbury Avenue
Ealing London W5 1LX
Telephone +44 (0)20 8992 5699

Takes men and women of all nationalities.

E

Other hostels in the UK

General

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)

642 Forest Road
Walthamstow
London E17 3EF
Telephone +44 (0)20 8520 0931
Fax +44 (0)20 8521 8581
www.ymca.org.uk

Offers temporary hostel accommodation for people of any religion at locations throughout the UK.

Methodist International Student Work

www.misw.org.uk/accommodation

Offers accommodation for international students at several locations in England.

Glasgow

Glasgow College of Nautical Studies Halls of Residence (M, W, MC)

21 Thistle Street
Glasgow G5 9XB
Telephone +44 (0)141 565 2500
Fax +44 (0)141 565 2599
E-mail enquiries@gcns.ac.uk
www.glasgow-nautical.ac.uk

Leeds

Mary Morris International Residence Ltd (M, W, MC, Ch)

24 Shire Oak Road
Headingley
Leeds LS6 2DE
Telephone +44 (0)113 284 4600
Fax +44 (0)113 293 4600
E-mail admin@marymorris.com
www.marymorris.com

Liverpool

Cosmopolitan Housing Association Ltd (M, W, MC, Ch)

Cosmopolitan House
2 Marybone
Liverpool L3 2BY
Telephone +44 (0)151 227 3716
Fax +44 (0)151 255 0338
www.cosmopolitanhousing.co.uk

Oxford

Ealing Families

Alexandra Residential Club
133 Woodstock Road
Oxford OX2 6HW
Telephone +44 (0)1865 552021
Fax +44 (0)1865 516358

For women aged between 16 and 30 years; for long stays only.

York

York Housing Association Ltd (M, W, MC, Ch)

2 Alpha Court
Monks Cross Drive
Huntington
York YO32 9WN
Telephone +44 (0)1904 636061
Fax +44 (0)1904 612623
E-mail info@yorkha.org.uk
www.yorkha.org.uk



F Acronyms

AA	Automobile Association	FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
AICE	Advanced International Certificate of Education	FE	further education
BA	Bachelor of Arts	FLR(S)	Further Leave to Remain (Student)
BEng	Bachelor of Engineering	GCE	General Certificate of Education
BIA	Border and Immigration Agency	GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
BPAS	British Pregnancy Advisory Service	GMAT	Graduate Management Admission Test
BSc	Bachelor of Science	GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
BST	British Summer Time	GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
CCETSW	Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work	GTTR	Graduate Teacher Training Registry
CSFP	Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan	HE	higher education
DFID	Department for International Development	HND	Higher National Diploma
DPhil	Doctor of Philosophy	IB	International Baccalaureate
DSS	Department of Social Services	IELTS	International English Language Testing System
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
EAP	English for Academic Purposes	MA	Master of Arts
EEA	European Economic Area	MEng	Master of Engineering
ESP	English for Specific Purposes	MOT	Ministry of Transport
EU	European Union	MPhil	Master of Philosophy
		MRes	Master of Research



MSc	Master of Science	TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
NACPME	National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Medical Education	UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions System
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre	UCLES	University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
NEAB	Northern Examinations and Assessment Board	UK	United Kingdom
NHS	National Health Service	VAT	value-added tax
NI	National Insurance	VCE	Vocational A-level
NUS	National Union of Students	YHA	Youth Hostels Association
ORSAS	Overseas Research Students Awards Scheme		
PEOs	Public Enquiry Offices		
PG Cert	postgraduate certificate		
PG Dip	postgraduate diploma		
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education		
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy		
RAC	Royal Automobile Club		
RADAR	Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation		
SCE	Scottish Certificate of Education		
SNP	Scottish National Party		
SWAS	Social Work Admissions System		
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language		



UK map





The UK experience

Wherever you will be living in the UK you will find plenty to do and see locally, but make sure you do not miss out on the full range of UK experiences. What about trying some of these? You can find the places listed below on the UK map on page 172. For a comprehensive guide to things to do, go to www.visitbritain.com





1 Take a trip on the London Eye

The world's tallest observation wheel (at 153 metres), will give you spectacular views of up to 25 miles over the capital city. www.londoneye.com

2 See a performance by the Welsh National Opera

Acclaimed as perhaps the UK's best opera company, the Welsh National Opera (WNO) is based in Cardiff. Details of its programme of performances can be found at www.wno.org.uk. There are also high-quality performances at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the nearby English National Opera (both in London). www.wno.org.uk, www.royalopera.org, www.eno.org

3 Go to a football match

Feel the passion at one of the temples of world football: maybe Old Trafford, the home of Manchester United, Anfield (Liverpool), The Emirates Stadium (Arsenal), Stamford Bridge (Chelsea) or St James's Park (Newcastle United). Beyond the Premiership – where tickets are easier to get hold of – there are 92 teams playing league football in England and Wales, and 40 in Scotland. The season runs from August to May. www.thefa.com (all about the Football Association and games), www.britishsports.com

4 Visit the Tate Modern gallery

A renovated power station on the banks of the Thames in London, Tate Modern is the stunning home of work by international modern artists, including Dali, Picasso, Matisse, Rothko, and Warhol. Entry is free. There are also Tate Galleries in Liverpool, St Ives (Cornwall) and Tate Britain in London, holding a combination of modern and more classical works. www.tate.org.uk

5 Make a tour of the shows at the Edinburgh International Festival

Hundreds of top-quality music, theatre and dance acts perform at this world-renowned festival held every August at locations throughout the city. There is also the Fringe Festival, which is famous for its comedy and some more weird and wonderful performances. www.eif.co.uk www.edfringe.com and www.britsurf.co.uk

6 Surf at Newquay

Newquay is one of the best surfing beaches in the UK, and the waves are said to compare with Bondi, Malibu and Waikiki. You will also find good surf on the Gower Peninsula in Wales, the north-east of Scotland, and the Northumbrian coast. Newquay hosts the largest UK surfing competition – the British Universities Surfing Championships – which takes place in March, and the professional tour competition arrives in Newquay every summer. www.britsurf.org and www.britsurf.co.uk



7 Experience the 'craic' in Northern Ireland

It is such an important part of their way of life that the Irish have their own word ('craic') for what might also be called the fun or the buzz of people getting together to enjoy themselves. www.ni-tourism.com

8 Go shopping in Leeds

The Victorian Quarter of Leeds, with its high fashion boutiques and cosmopolitan atmosphere, is often compared with the shopping areas of Paris and Milan. www.vrleeds.com

9 See a West End show

Shows like *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables*, and *The Woman in Black* are so popular they have been running for years on end. But you will also be able to see new productions, work from new writers and appearances by Hollywood film stars. You will find theatres in all major towns and cities around the UK. www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk

10 Taste a Balti curry in Birmingham

The city of Birmingham has its own 'Balti Triangle', so-called because of the sheer number of Balti Indian restaurants in the area, and the quality and variety of the curries on offer. www.birminghamplus.com and www.balti-birmingham.co.uk

11 See the latest technology in action at the Science Museum in London

The new Wellcome Wing is a theatre of contemporary science and technology. Some of the current exhibits allow you to explore virtual worlds, investigate how your genes have determined your identity and development, and take part in a multi-user game that allows you to shape an imaginary future. www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

Find the literary and movie landmarks

You have read the book or seen the film: now walk in the footsteps of some UK legends. For example, you will find many places to visit relating to Charles Dickens and his work in London **12**, the Brontë sisters (West Yorkshire) **13**, Beatrix Potter (the Lake District) **14**, Thomas Hardy (Dorset) **15**, William Shakespeare (Stratford-upon-Avon) **16**. www.nationaltrust.org.uk and www.visitbritain.com

17 See your favourite bands at the Carling Weekend Festivals in Reading and Leeds

Razorlight and Red Hot Chili Peppers are among a long list of bands due to play at these rock events in Reading and Leeds in 2007. The Festivals will take place over the weekend of 24–26 August 2007. Check the websites for line-ups. www.readingfestival.com; www.leedsfestival.com



18 Go to a cricket match

International and first-class cricket is played at the Edgbaston (Birmingham), Headingley (Leeds), Lords (London), Old Trafford (Manchester) and Trent Bridge (Nottingham) grounds from April to September. www.visitbritain.com and www.ecb.co.uk

19 Visit the Salford Quays development in Manchester

Formerly a major inland dock at the head of the Manchester Shipping Canal, the Salford Quays area has been redeveloped and now boasts the Lowry Centre arts complex and a new museum – the Imperial War Museum North – designed by the world-renowned architect Daniel Libeskind. www.thelowry.com and www.iwm.org.uk

20 Walk in the Lake District

A breathtaking location for climbing, walking or just to gather your thoughts. The Lake District was the first location in the world to be awarded a 'Green Globe' as a sustainable tourism destination. There are great routes for walking throughout the UK. www.cumbria-the-lake-district.co.uk and www.walking-routes.co.uk

21 Watch the stars at Wimbledon

The tennis tournament that all the world's players want to take part in, and whether you get tickets or not, an unmissable part of summer in the UK. In 2007, the championships run from 25 June to 8 July. www.wimbledon.com

22 Join the Notting Hill Carnival

It's Europe's biggest street party. More than one million people share the mixture of hot Caribbean music, dancing and food as the wild and dazzling procession snakes through the streets of London (26–27 August 2007). www.nottinghillcarnival.org.uk

23 Be contemplative at Stonehenge

No-one is exactly sure of the meaning of this 5,000-year-old circle of stones in the middle of the Wiltshire countryside, but one thing is certain, Stonehenge still has a magical presence. www.english-heritage.org.uk

24 Take part in Hogmanay

Scotland celebrates New Year's Eve in a big way, and you will find a friendly atmosphere and plenty of goodwill wherever you are. The festivities are centred in the capital city, Edinburgh, where there is a huge street party for everyone to join in. www.edinburghshogmanay.org



25 Try the crabs at Cromer

This small seaside town on the east coast is famous for the quality of its crabs. You will find fresh fish and seafood wherever you are in the UK – look out especially for fish stalls at local markets. www.thisiscromer.co.uk

26 Explore the Leicester Space Centre

Visit Leicester's exciting new attraction dedicated entirely to space. Discover real rockets, satellites and more, on a spectacular voyage of discovery. www.spacecentre.co.uk

27 Visit the Hay-on-Wye literature festival

Hay is a tiny market town in the Black Mountains of the Welsh Marches. It has 3,900 people and 39 bookshops. For ten days a year 80,000 visitors converge on Hay from all over the UK, Europe and America to join in a literature festival. (24 May – 3 June 2007). www.hayfestival.com

28 Visit the Yonex All England Open (badminton)

The All England Championships – the world's greatest and most prestigious badminton grand prix tournament – takes place at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena. The championships are normally scheduled for early spring time. www.badmintonengland.co.uk



UK calendar

2007

1 April

Palm Sunday
(Christian)

1 April

April Fool's Day

3 April

Passover (Jewish)

6 April

Good Friday (Christian)
Bank Holiday

9 April

Easter Monday
(Christian) Bank
Holiday

14 April

Sikh New Year Festival

23 April

St George's Day
(England)

4 May

Birthday of Buddha

7 May

Early May Bank Holiday

17 May

Ascension Day
(Christian)

27 May

Whit Sunday

28 May

Spring Bank Holiday

17 June

Trooping the Colour,
London (The Queen's
official birthday)

6 August

Bank Holiday
(Scotland)

11 August

Lailat al Miraj (Muslim)

26–27 August

Notting Hill Carnival

13 September

Ramadan begins
(Muslim)

22 September

Yom Kippur (Jewish)

13 October

End of Ramadan

28 October

British Summer Time
ends – clocks go back
one hour

9 November

Diwali (Sikh, Hindu
and Jain)

11 November

Remembrance Sunday

5 December

Hannukah (Jewish)

18 December

Hajj begins (Muslim)

21 December

End of Hajj

25 December

Christmas Day

26 December

Boxing Day

31 December

New Year's Eve
Hogmanay (Scotland)



2008

1 January

New Year's Day Bank Holiday

2 January

Bank Holiday (Scotland)

9 January

Islamic New Year

19 January

Ashura (Islamic)

23 January

Hindu Spring New Year

5 February

Shrove Tuesday (Christian)

6 February

Ash Wednesday (Christian)

7 February

Chinese New Year

2 March

Mother's Day

21 March

Purim (Jewish)

21 March

Good Friday (Christian) Bank Holiday

23 March

Easter Sunday (Christian)

24 March

Easter Monday (Christian) Bank Holiday

30 March

British Summer Time begins – clocks go forward one hour

13 April

Sikh New Year Festival

14 April

Ramanavami (Hindu)



The world from the UK

The following listing will help you keep in touch with home and with friends in other countries, or plan your travels from the UK. If you have problems with dialling an international number you can call the International operator on telephone number 155. international directory enquiries is 118 505 but note that you will be charged premium rates to use this service.

Country	Distance from London in miles	Time difference from the UK	Dialling code from the UK
Argentina	6,900 (Buenos Aires)	-3 hours	00 54
Armenia	2,250 (Yerevan)	+4 hours	00 374
Australia	10,553 (Canberra)	+8 to +10 hours	00 61
Azerbaijan	2,480 (Baku)	+4 hours	00 994
Bahrain	3,160	+3 hours	00 973
Bangladesh	4,980 (Dhaka)	+6 hours	00 880
Belgium	199 (Brussels)	+1 hour	00 32
Brazil	5,750 (Rio de Janeiro)	-2 to -5 hours	00 55
Bulgaria	1,270 (Sofia)	+2 hours	00 359
Canada	3,341 (Ottawa)	-3.5 to -8 hours	00 1
China	5,071 (Beijing)	+8 hours	00 86
Colombia	5,260 (Bogotá)	-5 hours	00 57



Country	Distance from London in miles	Time difference from the UK	Dialling code from the UK
Czech Republic	644 (Prague)	+1 hour	00 420
Denmark	592 (Copenhagen)	+1 hour	00 45
Egypt	2,191 (Cairo)	+2 hours	00 20
Finland	1,133 (Helsinki)	+2 hours	00 358
France	213 (Paris)	+1 hour	00 33
Germany	577 (Berlin)	+1 hour	00 49
Ghana	3,170 (Accra)	no change	00233
Greece	1,486 (Athens)	+2 hours	00 30
Hong Kong	6,052	+8 hours	00 852
India	4,164 (New Delhi)	+5.5 hours	00 91
Indonesia	7,278 (Djakarta)	+7 to +8 hours	00 62
Italy	897 (Rome)	+1 hour	00 39
Japan	5,956 (Tokyo)	+9 hours	00 81
Kenya	4,228 (Nairobi)	+3 hours	00 254
Lebanon	2,160 (Beirut)	+2 hours	00 961
Malaysia	6,557 (Kuala Lumpur)	+8 hours	00 60
Mexico	5,556 (Mexico City)	-6 to -8 hours	00 52
Morocco	1,240 (Rabat)	no change	00 212
Netherlands	221 (Amsterdam)	+1 hour	00 31
New Zealand	11,682 (Wellington)	+12 hours	00 64
Nigeria	2,960 (Abuja)	+1 hour	00 234
Norway	718 (Oslo)	+1 hour	00 47



Country	Distance from London in miles	Distance from the UK	Time difference from the UK	Dialling code
Pakistan	3,763	(Islamabad)	+5 hours	00 92
Philippines	6,690	(Manila)	+8 hours	00 63
Portugal	985	(Lisbon)	no change	00 351
Russia	1,559	(Moscow)	+2.5 to +10 hours	00 7
Singapore	6,739		+8 hours	00 65
South Africa	5,609	(Johannesburg)	+2 hours	00 27
South Korea	5,519	(Seoul)	+9 hours	00 82
Spain	783	(Madrid)	+1 hour	00 34
Sri Lanka	5,410	(Colombo)	+6 hours	00 94
Sweden	892	(Stockholm)	+1 hour	00 46
Taiwan	6,094	(Taipei)	+8 hours	00 886
Thailand	5,924	(Bangkok)	+7 hours	00 66
Turkey	1,557	(Istanbul)	+2 hours	00 90
United Arab Emirates	3,407	(Dubai)	+4 hours	00 971
USA	3,674	(Washington DC)	-5 to -11 hours	00 1
Venezuela	4,640	(Caracas)	+4 hours	00 58
Vietnam	5,747	(Hanoi)	+7 hours	00 84
Zambia	4,930	(Lusaka)	+2 hours	00 260



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The UK means the United Kingdom and consists of England, Scotland, Wales (Great Britain) and Northern Ireland.

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