

STUDY GUIDE

UNITED KINGDOM



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The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom (UK) and Britain.

The capital city of UK is London. The UK consists of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy, with executive power exercised on behalf of the Queen Elizabeth II by the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers who head departments. The cabinets, including the Prime Minister and other ministers collectively make up Her Majesty's Government.

The United Kingdom has three legal systems, English law, which applies in English and Wales, and Northern Ireland law, which applies in Northern Ireland, are based on common law.

United Kingdom developed into the safest, cleanest, liberal democracy and economically prosperous cities in Western countries. However, the country is also prominent in science and technology.

According to the Census survey has showed UK has a diverse populace of nearly to be 63.2 million people, which is made up 86% of the white ethnic group in 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 2012).



British people may identify themselves as being British; or as being English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or Irish. The Christianity is the most practiced religion in the UK and followed by Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam.

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UK Time Zone

The UK is in the Western European Time Zone; GMT is the Standard Time and in the summer months British Summer Time is in use.

UK Weather

The overall climate in England is called temperate maritime. This means that it is mild with temperatures not much lower than 0°C in winter and not much higher than 32°C in summer. It also means that it is damp and is subject to frequent changes.

July and August are normally the warmest month. Around the coasts, February is normally the coldest month, but inland there is little to choose between January and February as the coldest month.

Languages in UK

The UK does not have a constitutionally defined official language. English is the main language (being spoken monolingual by more than 95% of the UK population).

Main immigrant languages spoken include Punjabi, Cantonese, Greek, Italian, Bengali, Saraiki, Urdu, Sylheti, Southwestern Caribbean Creole, Gujarati and Kashmiri.

Main foreign languages include French (23%), German (9%) and Spanish (8%).



CURRENCY

Currency and Denomination

The Currency of UK is called British pound (GBP) and it is in the form of Coins and Notes. The smallest unit is called Penny.



Notes come in denominations of 5.00, 10.00, 20.00 and 50.00. Coins come in denominations of 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, 1.00 and 2.00.

SECURITY

Security in UK

The United Kingdom is a low crime rate country.

The typical criminal incidents include pick pocketing, mugging, and "snatch and grab" theft of mobile phone, watches and jewelry.

It is important to take care of yourself to ensure that you are safe in a new environment:

1. If walking home at night, try to walk in groups.
2. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash with you.
3. Don't leave your drink unattended in bars and nightclubs. There have been some instances of drinks being spiked with illegal substances, leading to incidents of robbery and rape.
4. Make sure you report to the police immediately if any crime happens.



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Dining in UK

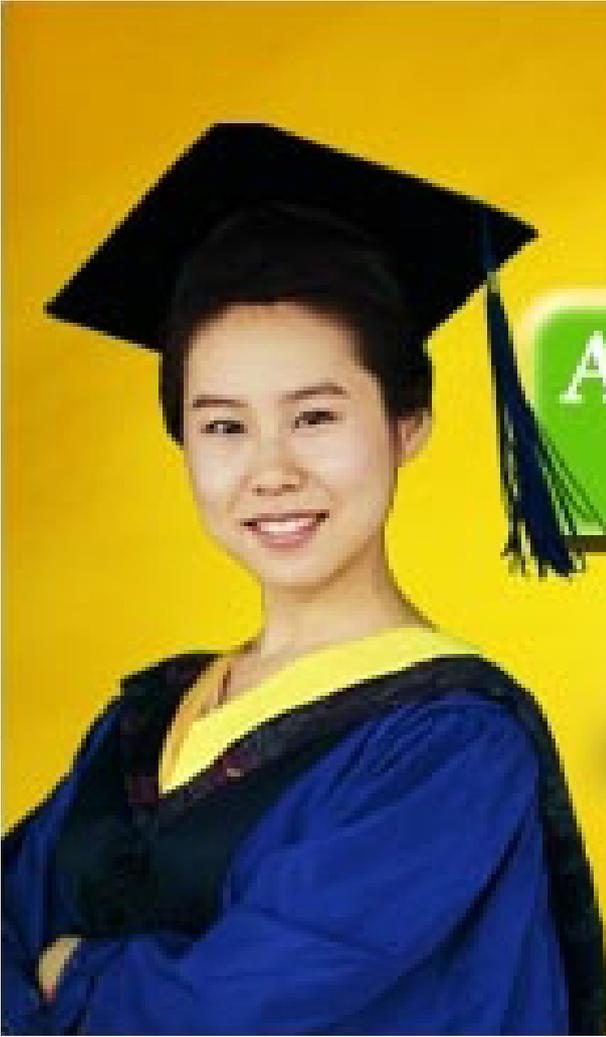
The food you can buy in the UK reflects the many ethnic influences in British society. Most supermarkets sell ingredients from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, as well as food from many other parts of the world. The British are increasingly healthy eaters and there is a very wide range of organic produce available in shops and supermarkets.



Of course, you'll still find the famous English breakfast and fish and chips, but you'll also see a very diverse range of meals and menus while you're studying in the UK. Families in the UK often eat a traditional 'Sunday roast' on Sundays, but those same families are also likely to enjoy anything from Italian pizza to Singapore Noodles. When you become an international student in the UK, cooking and sharing a traditional meal from your home country is a great way to make new friends.

As in most other European countries, it is acceptable in the UK to drink alcohol in moderate amounts, and pubs and wine bars form an established part of British social life. All pubs and bars sell non-alcoholic drinks too, so you don't have to drink alcohol to enjoy yourself. People also meet to drink tea and coffee, and you'll find a vast range of different coffee shops in every UK town or city.





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If you like to shop, you will find some interesting souvenirs, and there are some great markets for shopping UK that are worth checking out whether you plan to buy something or not.

Nearby, department store enthusiasts will enjoy a stroll along either Oxford Street or Knightsbridge.

These streets are home to the ever-popular Harrods and Harvey Nichols, both of which are insanely appealing to local and foreign shoppers. For music, books, and smaller shops, try the out-of-the-way streets. You won't have as many crowds to fight and some of the local owners are incredibly welcoming to tourists.



Scotland shopping has a different flavour altogether than England. Of course, Glasgow and Edinburgh still feature many of the high end outlets and department stores that tourists will find in London, and of course they still take the same UK currency, but Scotland shopping for many has a quaint feel.

Outside the big cities, Scotland shopping can reveal some of the most unique shops and hand crafted local items in the world. Since many residents of Scotland are the descendants of families who have been in place for many generations, cultural traditions have been passed right down through the bloodline. Some



of the most fascinating shops will be found in the smaller villages and gift shops that line the shore. These are great places to pick up gifts or special souvenirs by which to remember your trip to Scotland.

One important thing for travellers to note is that in addition to the high rate of UK currency exchange, the government imposes a tax of about 19% on all purchases. This tax is referred to as the VAT (value added tax). The good news for you regarding VAT is that as a non-British resident you are eligible for a tax refund on your purchases (you should expect to get about 15% back). In order to get this refund, you must get a VAT refund form from the retailer that sells you your goods, and you must have them fill it out for you right then and there. No exceptions.



Typical opening times are:

Mondays - Saturdays 9:00am to 5:30pm
some shopping centres stay open until 8pm or later.

Sunday - 10am to 4pm (or 11am to 5pm)

Sunday shopping has become popular in recent years and most large shops in towns are open for business. Shops are only allowed to trade for 6 hours on Sundays.

Large supermarkets are open for 24 hours except for Sundays.

Many supermarkets and superstores otherwise open from 8am until 10pm from Mondays to Saturdays and 10am to 4pm (or 11am to 5pm) on Sundays.



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- Telecommunications (Telecom)



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Postal Services in UK



The Royal Mail is the UK's main delivery service for smaller items (letters, large letters and packets).

A parcel is a larger item (usually packed in a box) which is sent by post. Parcelforce is the main parcel delivery service.

You can find full details at <http://www.parcelforce.com>, or ask at a post office for a brochure. A package sent abroad which contains only printed papers which weigh up to 5 kilograms can be sent at the cheaper letter postage rates, but any other package weighing over 2 kilograms will be considered to be a parcel. Do not send anything that could be dangerous or which is not allowed (such as aerosol sprays, or batteries).

The cost of sending a letter or parcel depends on the size, the type of service chosen (there are different levels of speed, security and insurance), the destination (the world is divided into zones), and the weight (there may be a maximum weight limit). If you know the correct postage and have attached enough stamps, you can put your letter directly in your nearest post box at any time. If you are unsure about the cost of sending a letter or parcel, you should take it to your post office and weigh it (otherwise it may be delayed, or the person receiving it may have to pay extra). Write your address on the back, so that it can be returned to you if it cannot be delivered. You can find full details about the Royal Mail's services at <http://www.royalmail.com>.

Banking Service

If you are going UK for longer than six months, we strongly recommended you open a UK bank account when you arrive. You can sometimes transfer money from your home country to a UK bank account, but you must first check with your government that you are legally entitled to do so. If you are planning on using your debit or credit cards while you are in the UK, it is also a good idea to let your bank know.

The major high street banks in England and Wales are Lloyds, Barclays, Midland and National Westminster (Nat West). In Scotland there are the Bank of Scotland, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Clydesdale Bank.

Generally bank opens on Monday-Friday 9:30 am-3:30 pm. Some branches stay open until 5:30 pm, and a few are open Saturday morning. Most banks will have an ATM (Automated Teller Machine) outside the bank where you can draw out money with a credit or cash card. Many of these are available to use 24 hours a day, but some do still close for a few hours during the night.

In order to open a bank account you will need the following:

- Your passport
- Proof of address
- Proof you are a student - we will issue you with an official bank letter after registration

(Source from www.intohigher.com)



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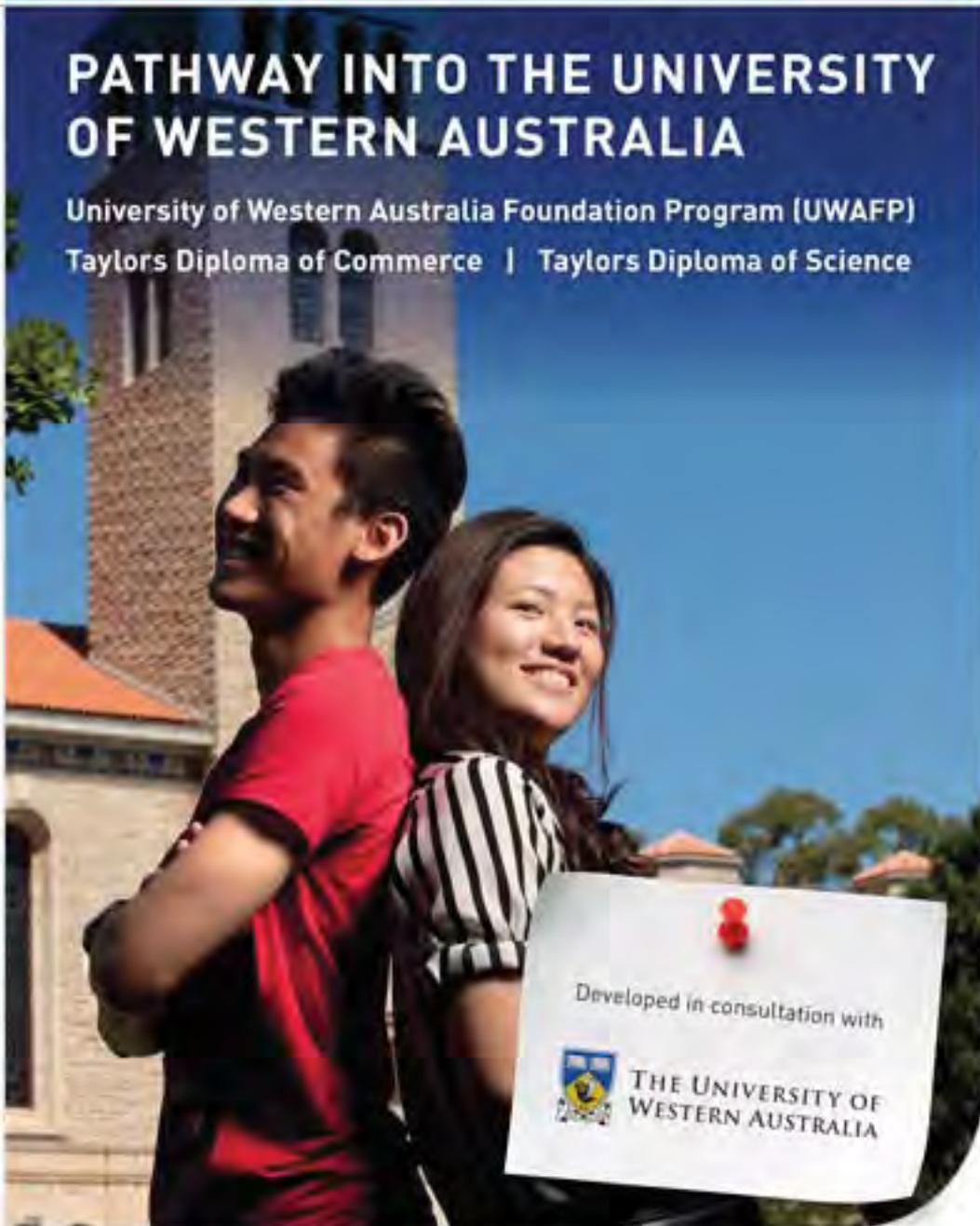


Photo: Greg Stone (left), The University of Western Australia; Photo: Greg Stone (right), The University of Western Australia; Photo: Greg Stone (center), The University of Western Australia

Depending on your place of study, there are several types of accommodation arrangements you can pursue like:

- i. On-Campus living - provided at an optional fee by the educational institution; fees and facilities may vary from one educational institution to another.
- ii. Off-Campus living - accommodation will be settled by students themselves. For on-campus or off-campus accommodation, there are a variety of types and budgets to suit your lifestyle, and many of them are located a stone's throw from your intended place of study.



Such accommodations may come in the form of college hostels, apartments, bungalows, condominiums or terrace houses in quiet neighbourhood or close to the institution.

Average Cost of Accommodation in London

Flat-Share Rental per month		One Bedroom Flat Rental per month	
East London	£290 - £390 (single), £430 - £600 (double)	East London	£650 - £750
West London	£280 - £430 (single), £459 - £690 (double)	West London	£700 - £800
South London	£280 - £500 (single), £350 - £650 (double)	South London	£600 - £700
North London	£300 - £400 (single), £430 - £550 (double)	North London	£650 - £750

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Public Transportation

United Kingdom has most comprehensive public transport systems. The public transportation system in the UK comprises of bus, railway and taxi services.

List of public transport provided in UK are:

1. Eurostar
2. Eurotunnel
3. Taxi
4. Minicabs

UK cost of Transportation

UK cost of Transportation	
Weekly Zone 1-6 Travelcard	£41
Monthly Zone 1-2 Travelcard	£86
Train trip to Edinburgh	£110 (standard single)
Train trip to Cambridge/ Brighton	£17 - £20 (single)
Avg mid-sized car rental for a weekend	£70
Return budget flight to Spain	£120 - £150 (budget carrier)
Eurostar return ticket to Paris	£125 (standard class)
Return flight to Ireland	£50 - £60 (budget carrier)

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Cost of Living in UK

Expenditures are dependent on the chosen course, education institution, duration of study and your preferred lifestyle. The main expenses for international students are:

1. Visa application
2. Registration fee
3. Deposit
4. Resource fee
5. Insurance Premium
6. Other Incidental Costs.



Other indirect costs may include the following:

UK cost of Food & Drink	
Average weekly grocery bill (including food, basic laundry and toiletry items for 2 people)	£60
Average pub meal	£6 - £10
Average restaurant meal	£12 - £20
Pint of beer	£2.50 - £3
Average bottle of wine	£10
Average meal for two in mid-priced restaurant	£40

UK cost of Entertainment	
Movie	£7-£10
West End Theatre	£25+
£5 - £20	£5 - £20
Live music/concerts	£10+
Chart CDs	£8 - £12
New release DVD rental	£3.50



Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

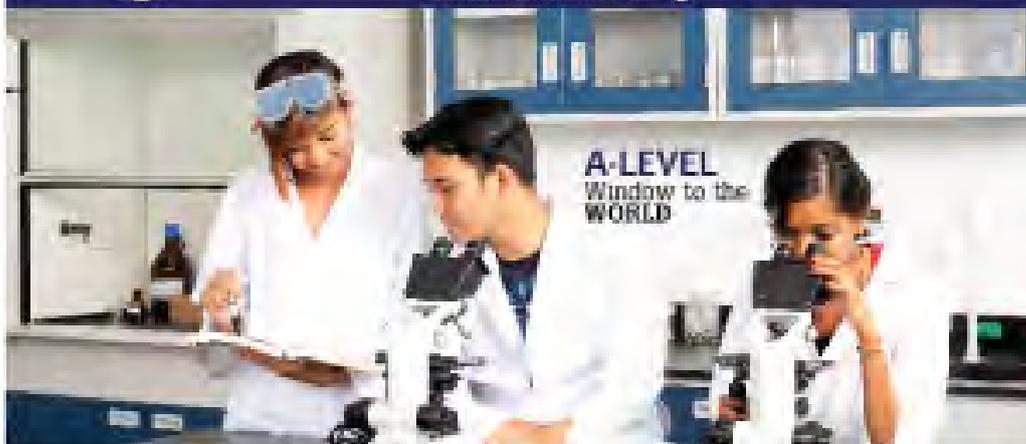
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Best value universities in the United Kingdom

Interested in studying in the United Kingdom but find that you are limited by financial constraints? Well fret not as we have compiled a list of the top 10 best value universities in the UK which will give you the most bang for your buck, or pound sterling in this case. Value as well as academic excellence were considered during the compilation of this list.



No	University	Academic league table ranking	Average rent per week	Tuition fees	Details
1	University of Ulster	2013: 61	£51.50	£6000	At the number 1 spot is the University of Ulster. Northern Ireland's cheaper rental prices, combined with tuition fees well short of £9000 make University of Ulster, ranked a respectable 60th by the Complete University Guide league table 2013, the best-value university in Britain.
2	Robert Gordon University	2013: 52	£70.79	£5000	Another Scottish institution in the rankings, Robert Gordon offers reasonable tuition fees even for non-Scottish students at just £5000 per annum.
3	University of Glasgow	2013: 17	£70.73	£6750	This historic Russell Group university is highly ranked in academic tables, and also offers free tuition for Scottish students. At £6,750 per annum it presents good value for other students too, with rental accommodation very reasonable in some nearby neighbourhoods.
4	Stirling University	2013: 50	£62.90	£6750	'Excellent value' can be used to describe Stirling university as its respectable academic ranking and reasonable rental prices combine to make for an attractive place for higher education. In addition, Scottish students are not required to pay any tuition fees under the current fees regime.
5	Lancaster University	2013: 9	£57.46	£9000	Leading the top 5 is Lancaster University which has recently climbed up the academic rankings and managed to secure a spot in the top 10 this year. With average rents below £60 per week for students, it presents good enough value for money to make the top 5.
6	Durham University	2013: 5	£66.75	£9000	Similar to Oxford, Durham charges the maximum tuition fee. You do get what you pay for as Durham ranks 5 th in the country by academic status. Its students also enjoy lower average rental prices for accommodation.
7	University of Oxford	2013: 3	£80.12	£9000	Coming in at number 7, the University of Oxford. Ranked 3 rd in the academic league table ranking, Oxford provides one of the best educations in the world for £9000 a year. The average rate for rents in Oxford are also slightly lower than at Cambridge or LSE which are the 2 institutions ranked higher than Oxford.
8	Queen's University Belfast	2013: 25	£51.10	£9000	Although this Russell Group university in Northern Ireland charges English students the full £9,000 tuition fees, Northern Irish students studying in Northern Ireland from 2013 pay a maximum £3,575 per year. Rent there is also well below the British average at just over £50 per week which is another plus point
9	Coventry University	2013: 65	£58.50	£7500	Coventry does not charge the full £9000 per annum despite being ranked 65 th in the UK by academic status. Attractive rent prices is another factor contributing towards it securing the ninth spot.
10	University of Birmingham	2013: 23	£59.37	£9000	Although Birmingham charges the full £9000 each year, its high league table placement and relatively low average rent per week mean it deserves a place in the list.

Why Study in United Kingdom



British education institutions have a long history of welcoming international students. Each year about 250,000-300,000 overseas students come to the UK to study programmes ranging from English language courses to university degrees.

The UK is the most popular destination in the world for international students. There are countless reasons why you should choose the UK to pursue your education goals.

1. Employment Opportunities

This is a huge advantage for students as they have job opportunities not only in the UK but everywhere in the world, because they are professional and highly trained, they are highly demanded by all industries all over the world. Living on your own in a new country and experiencing a new culture will also develop personal skills, such as independence, flexibility and adaptability, all of which are highly valued by employers.

2. Variety and choice

UK universities and colleges offer a huge range of academic and vocational opportunities available at all levels, from further to higher education. As a student you should have the freedom to pursue a further education in whatever you like there are many different courses that diverse universities offer and students can easily find what they really want.

3. Broaden your horizo

The UK is a multicultural, multi-faith country that has always welcomed migrants and visitors from abroad. By living in the UK, you will have the opportunity to experience new cultures and meet people from different backgrounds who hold different views. And, because the UK is such a popular destination for international students, you are sure to meet people from all over the world during your time in the UK.

4. Improve your English

English is the international language of business, science and technology. By studying and living in Britain, you will be immersed in the language and have the opportunity to perfect your English communication skills. It's a known fact that the UK is the best place to improve your language skills, other countries might encourage English but not to the extent of the UK.

5. Value for money

One of the most attractive features of studying in the UK is that it offers good value for money. Most undergraduate degrees take three years, making them shorter than similar programmes in other countries and very cost-effective. Some postgraduate degrees only last for one year (as opposed to two in other countries), which means you can finish your degree more quickly and start earning more in the workforce.

There are also a number of scholarships, and some financial assistance is available from UK institutions and possibly from institutions in your own country.

Student satisfaction in the United Kingdom

In the education industry, it is vital to ensure student satisfaction. A recent study has found that while the UK is Europe's most popular destination for international students, it ranks as the 13th in student satisfaction.

Students studying in Slovenia are the most satisfied, followed by Norway and Austria. International students in the UK are slightly more interested in the academic aspects of their university experience compared with the European average with factors such as the cost of living, social life and the weather being the main reasons for discontent, of which the quality of accommodation and its availability attract the highest number of complaints.

About 435,000 international students studied at the United Kingdom's 163 publicly funded universities in 2011-12, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, comfortably ahead of its main competitors which are Germany, Russia, France, Spain and the Netherlands. However, other European nations are becoming increasingly attractive options, and coupled with the increasing availability of master's courses taught in English at continental universities, the UK's current market-leading position looks to be an unstable one.



General Visa Requirements for the UK

The United Kingdom (UK) has been a popular destination for students who wish to study in a widely recognized institution. Generally, there are two types of visas available for students to choose from. These visas are the Student Visitor visas and the Tier 4 student visas. It may seem confusing but worry not, as we guide you on the requirements to obtain a visa to the UK.

If you are an EEA or Swiss national then you do not need permission to enter the UK or to study here. If you already have immigration permission to come to (or remain in) the UK in a non-study related category this might allow you to study. However, some immigration categories prohibit study. You should therefore seek advice from an advisor at the institution where you intend to study.

If you have already been accepted into a course of study there are two types of visa for studying in the UK: Student Visitor visas and Tier 4 student visas.

However, if you choose to come as a Student Visitor you will be much more restricted than if you come as a Tier 4 student. You will not be allowed to do any work or work placement (even if it is part of a course or unpaid work). You will also not be allowed to apply to extend your stay in the UK.

On the other hand as a Tier 4 (General) student, you can study at any school, college or university which has been granted a Tier 4 (General) sponsor licence by the Home Office. Only institutions with a Tier 4 sponsor licence can issue you with a confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS), which you must obtain in order to apply for immigration permission as a Tier 4 (General) student.

Requirements:

Course confirmation: you must receive a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from a university approved by the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

Funding: you must provide evidence of funding to pay for both your course tuition fees and your monthly living costs.

Check you are eligible for a UK Student Visa but do not apply until after you have been accepted onto a course. Your chosen university can guide you through the visa process once you have been accepted onto a course

Lastly provide documents such as more than six months of passport validity, Passport pictures, 40 points to get the Tier Visa, which will be gained through showing your CAS, Funding and other educational certificates that the institute might require to show.

Salary Outlay in United Kingdom

What do you do after you have completed your degree in the UK? Are you planning to work and eventually settle down in the United Kingdom? Although the value of your degree is high, you must remember that there will be job competition. It would certainly not be easy to get to the top immediately. What are the steps that you should take to ensure that you can have the life in the UK that you have dreamed of? We have just the right tips to get you started.

The Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR) has predicted a jump of 4% in 2012, raising it from £25,000. Mainly big firms in cities, but the reality is that approximately 200,000 students graduate from UK Universities each year. Sometimes there aren't 200,000 graduate jobs or training schemes for each graduate. So, competition is fierce.

Most graduates are equipped with similar knowledge, skills and qualifications so the important thing is to make the most of any opportunity that presents itself. Making the best out of an opportunity really means to go the extra yard. Be prepared to relocate to a different part of the country and be prepared to take a reduced salary. Initially it may not be the £22k - 25k that you have dreamt of whilst at University but if it pays your rent and gets you started it's a platform from which to launch your career.

The important thing is that you get your foot in the door. You have the ability and the drive so go out there and get it. Since once you have a start you will only accomplish more and more. A job experience in UK is like no other and then again highly valued. Don't let competition hold you back.

Graduate's Estimated Salaries

Sales Administrative	£19,750
Credit Controller	£20,000
Elementary construction occupation	£20,905
Stock control clerks and assistants	£20,907
Office supervisors	£25,054
Design occupations	£27,064
Finance officers	£25,615
Medical practitioners	£69,741

This table roughly shows you how much a fresh graduate can achieve to get working in one of these positions. But the salary might also vary depending on the company. In the UK, graduates can aim for a higher salary because they know that their skills will be valued and they will be paid fairly.

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