

Welcome to your new home

A guide for students preparing to join
us at an International Study Centre or
College in the United Kingdom.



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We want to help you settle into your new home quickly and easily, so that you can concentrate on your studies and start enjoying student life.

This guide provides all of the important information you need to prepare for travelling to the UK as well as living and studying at your International Study Centre or College.

Further location specific information is available on your Welcome Hub – a dedicated website for each International Study Centre or College with essential information on what to pack, arranging travel, and settling into life in the UK.

Get ready to join us

Moving to a new country is a big step. Whether it's your first time abroad or you've travelled before, studying in the UK brings new experiences, and getting things in order is essential. Here are the most important things you need to take care of before your arrival.

1. Apply for your visa

To study in the UK, you are required to have a valid visa. Our Admissions Centre will advise and issue the relevant documents you will need.

Student visa

For a Student visa you will need a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) number which will be issued to you by our Admissions Centre. You can only apply for your Student visa once you have received your CAS number.

Step 1: You may be required to have a Student Readiness interview. You will be contacted by Admissions to book your Student Readiness interview via a link. Remember to then attend your interview on the pre-booked date.

Step 2: Our Admissions Centre will issue a CAS preview by email from up to six months before your course start date (three months if you are in the UK), provided you:

1. Have met all academic, English language and other conditions in your offer letter.
2. Have completed, signed and returned your Acceptance and Indemnity Form to the Admissions Centre.
3. Are up-to-date with your payments as stated in your offer letter and payment plan.

Step 3: Carefully check all the details on the CAS preview and confirm that the information is correct. Once we have received your confirmation, we will issue you with your CAS statement that will include your CAS number.

Step 4: Before you submit your Student visa application, make sure you understand and meet all the requirements to avoid a visa refusal.

Before you apply, make sure you have:

- ✓ Sufficient funds in an acceptable account maintained for at least 28 consecutive days and the financial document is not expired at the time of payment for visa application.
- ✓ Paid the Immigration Health Surcharge for NHS health care treatment.
- ✓ All required documents in support of your visa application.

As part of your visa application you may be asked to attend a visa interview either face to face, by video conference or on the telephone. You may be asked questions about the reasons for studying in the UK, why you have chosen to study at your chosen destination and why you will study your chosen course. You should know about your chosen study destination and course and how it relates to your overall career plans as well as how you intend to fund your studies in the UK. You must answer all questions truthfully and accurately.

Note: Depending on the country you live in, you may need to have a tuberculosis (TB) test before you apply. For more information please visit: gov.uk/tb-test-visa

You can read the full visa guidance at: gov.uk/student-visa

Step 5: If your visa application is approved, you will be granted a digital eVisa. UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) uses an online digital immigration system. You will be able to access details of your immigration status, such as your visa expiry date and share code*, online through your UKIV account.

*A share code is a personal identifier that verifies your immigration status. To view your eVisa and get a share code to prove your immigration status, visit: www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status

2. Complete our Pre-Arrival form

It's important that we have up-to-date information for you. Fill out and update the information in the form at any time as you finalise your study and travel plans. The form can be found on your Welcome Hub.

3. Organise your accommodation

Depending on your International Study Centre or College, you can choose to live in University-managed residences, book accommodation with Amber - a leading student accommodation provider offering a range of options, or arrange your own private accommodation independently.

If you are booking your own private accommodation independently, it is important that you let us know where you are staying and that you are living less than a 60-minute commute away from the International Study Centre or College.

Please visit the Welcome Hub for more detailed information on how to book your accommodation.

4. Book your travel

Once you have received your visa, it is time to book your flights to the UK. You should arrive ready for the first day of the term/semester to get a good start to your studies. You may want to arrive at least a few days early in order to settle in and adjust to any time differences. If you require a taxi transfer from the airport, you need to complete the relevant section in the Pre-Arrival form.

You should not book any flights home until you arrive at the International Study Centre or College and speak with the Student Experience Team as there may be further assessments after the end of term/semester dates shown on your offer letter. You can then book your flight back home to be scheduled after any final assessments.

5. Ensure you are insured

In our experience, it is essential that international students have the protection of personal insurance for the duration of their time in the UK.

When you applied to the International Study Centre or College, you will have had the option of taking StudyCare Insurance cover. This policy will cover you for loss of personal possessions, travel delay, as well as providing medical insurance until the end of your International Study Centre or College academic programme. You can purchase StudyCare Insurance as part of the application process. If you prefer, you may take out insurance cover with another provider.

For full information on StudyCare Insurance, visit: studygroup.com/studycare

If you need help and advice, your local representative or your Student Enrolment Advisor can help you.

How to access to Welcome Hub?

When you confirm your place, you will receive an email with a link to the Welcome Hub and your user name and password to access the Pre-Arrival form.

What to bring with you to the UK

You'll need to pack some important items, such as your passport and visa, in your hand luggage for easy access, while other non-essential items can be packed away in your suitcase.

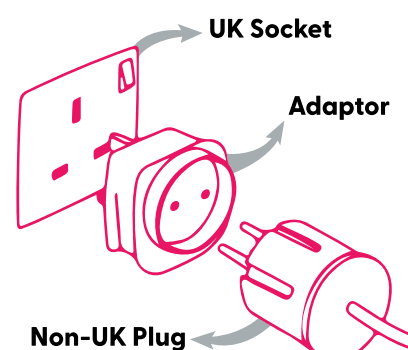
Things to pack in your hand luggage

- ☐ Passport, Visa vignette (if applicable), share code and eVisa
- ☐ UKVI Visa Decision letter
- ☐ Your offer letter
- ☐ Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) letter
- ☐ Academic qualification certificates and IELTS certificate or other original Secure English Language Test result
- ☐ Evidence of funding for your tuition fees and living costs, including sponsor letter (if you are being sponsored)
- ☐ Accommodation documents, including your signed tenancy agreement
- ☐ If you are under the age of 18, a copy of your UK Guardian details and Under 18 parental consent form

- ☐ Any insurance documents
- ☐ Medical certificates including vaccination records
- ☐ Essential toiletries and medications (please check with your airline what's permitted)
- ☐ Enough money to live on in the first few weeks. We advise you do not bring large amounts of cash.

Things to pack in your suitcase

Many of the personal items you wish to bring with you, such as clothes, accessories and books can go in your suitcase. Your accommodation may provide a bedding and catering pack, you should check directly what will be provided with the accommodation provider.



You must bring:

- ☐ Laptop computer and charger.*
- ☐ Comfortable clothes – the International Study Centre has an informal dress code. You can bring comfortable clothing such as trainers, jeans, t-shirts, jumpers and a warm/waterproof coat.
- ☐ Study supplies e.g. pens and paper notepads – these may be less expensive in your country.

* You must have a Windows or Mac based laptop available for use in order to access course materials, Learning Management System (LMS) / Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform and undertake assessments. Your device must be **no more than 5 years old** to ensure compatibility, performance, and security, and must include: a **built-in or external camera** in full working order, a **headset with microphone and headphones**.

Windows

- Windows 11 (64-bit) or later with at least 4GB RAM and 75 MB available free disk space per hour
- Web Browser: Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge (Chromium version)

Mac

- MacOS Big Sur (version 11) up to MacOS 15.1, or a more recent version with at least 4GB RAM and 75MB free disk space per hour
- Web Browser: Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge (Chromium version)

Devices NOT permitted for assessments

- **Touchscreen or mobile-type devices** such as iPads, tablets, and smartphones
- **Devices with ARM-based Processors** such as Chromebooks and laptops using ARM-based processors such as Microsoft Surface
- **Touchscreen laptops / "2-in-1" devices** such as laptops that fold, detach, or convert into a tablet
- **Devices designed primarily for touchscreen use** as these often run on unsupported hardware configurations and cannot be used for assessments
- **Linux, Windows 10S / 11S mode** operating systems

Valid passport

It is recommended that your passport should be valid for the duration of the course. If it expires during your studies, you will need to renew it in the UK.



Top tip



Check with your airline on what you can bring in terms of size and weight for hand and checked luggage.

Calling from the UK? Once you're in the UK and calling from a UK phone, you don't need to include the '+44', just replace it with a '0'. For example, a number that internationally is +44 113 812 3035 becomes 0113 812 3035.



Arriving in the UK

Travelling to a new country can be a little overwhelming. To make it easier for you, we've outlined the process below so that you know exactly what to expect when you arrive.

At Border Control

Be prepared for an immigration interview with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) staff. It is not unusual for international students to be stopped at the border, so please do not worry if this happens to you. Border Control will most likely just want to check that you are safe to enter the country. You must be able to answer some questions in English and have a basic conversation without the assistance of an interpreter - failure to do so may result in you being denied access to the UK, at which point you will have to return home. The UK Border Control can be very busy, so don't be surprised if you have to wait in a queue.

After collecting your luggage and making your way through customs, you will reach the Arrivals hall. Welcome to the UK!

For up-to-date information visit: gov.uk/uk-border-control

Getting to the International Study Centre or College

There are various of ways for you to travel from the airport to your International Study Centre or College. Depending on where you first arrive, you can take another flight, or book a taxi transfer, to make your own way by train.

Please visit the Welcome Hub for detailed information and guidance.

Top tip



Make sure you have original, paper copies of all your documents, not in digital formats on smart phones, tablets or other electronic devices. Keep them in your hand luggage in case you need to show them at the UK border.

Scotland

Scotland is a beautiful, friendly country known for its historic cities, stunning landscapes and top-ranked universities. It's a great place for international students to study, explore and feel at home.

- 1 University of Aberdeen
- 2 University of Strathclyde

England

England is an exciting and diverse country known for its top-ranked universities, rich history and iconic cities like London and Manchester. It offers international students a dynamic study experience with endless cultural and academic opportunities.

- 3 Durham University
- 4 University of Huddersfield
- 5 University of Leeds* / Leeds Beckett University
- 6 The University of Sheffield
- 7 Liverpool John Moores University
- 8 Royal Holloway, University of London
- 10 University of Bath
- 11 University of Surrey
- 12 Kingston University London
- 13 University of Sussex

* Delivered at Leeds International Study Centre

Our International Study Centres and Colleges in the UK

Wales

Wales is a beautiful and culturally rich part of the UK, known for its superb landscapes, historic castles and warm, welcoming communities. It offers excellent universities, a lower cost of living and a unique blend of English and Welsh heritage.

- 9 Cardiff University



Your welcome week

On your first, exciting day with us it is important that you start on time.

It is vital that you start on time so that you do not miss out on meeting your new classmates and enjoying all of the great social activities that have been planned for you. We will work with you in your first week to find out about your academic levels and how we can best support you in your studies.

What to bring with you when you come to the Centre/College?

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ UKVI Visa Decision Letter or EU Settlement Scheme eligibility share code and conditions letter
- ☐ Decision notification letter if you were granted an eVisa (student route application EU/EEA nationals)
- ☐ Your share code to prove your immigration status
- ☐ Evidence of eligibility to study (e.g. CAS letter)
- ☐ Evidence of your Secure English Language Test
- ☐ Digital photo of yourself (passport size)
- ☐ Sponsor letter (if you are being sponsored)
- ☐ If you are under the age of 18, a copy of your UK Guardian's details and Under 18 parental consent letter
- ☐ If required, bring your laptop so the centre or college can assist you with getting online.

As soon as you arrive at the centre or college, you must provide your registration documentation on your first day. Without submitting these documents, you may not be permitted to start attending your course. If you experience any technical difficulties, please speak to the student support team immediately.

What activities are planned during your welcome week?

Our Welcome week programme will introduce you to the International Study Centre or College, your classmates, tutors and welfare and support services. You will also receive full guidance on maintaining your health and safety whilst studying with us. There will also be events to help you to get to know your fellow classmates.

Please visit the Welcome Hub and check the 'Your first week' document for more information.

Top tip



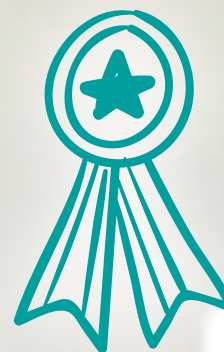
Make sure you remember your UKVI account login details so you can access it on your device anytime. This way, you can easily provide information about your immigration status, like your visa expiry date.

Advice on settling in



- 1. Say hello to your new neighbours.** Living in a student residence is a great way to make new, life-long friends. Other students around you, both from the UK and abroad, will be feeling the same as you. Talking to each other will really help you settle in. Why not take the first step by introducing yourself?
- 2. Join in!** There will be events planned at the International Study Centre or College as well as plenty of clubs and societies to join.
- 3. Don't forget to set your morning alarm on your first day** - you'll need plenty of time to get ready.

We want you to feel at home as quickly as possible. If you have any worries, you can always approach any of our friendly staff and they will be very happy to help.



Your checklist

As soon as possible

- ☐ Have you checked your contact information and provided other details in the Pre-Arrival form?
- ☐ Have you paid the required fees for your tuition and insurance (if applicable)?
- ☐ Have you applied for and received your visa?

Up to one month before you depart

- ☐ Have you checked the information in your Pre-Arrival form?
- ☐ Have you received your visa and booked your travel?
- ☐ Have you arranged a taxi transfer which you can book through the Pre-Arrival form?
- ☐ Have you booked your accommodation and received confirmation of your room allocation?
- ☐ Have you organised money to bring with you?
- ☐ Have you made a copy of your passport and other essential documents?

What to bring with you to the Centre or College

Please bring the following documents, so that we can register you on your course:

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ E-visa and Share Code
- ☐ UKVI Visa Decision Letter or EU Settlement Scheme eligibility share code and conditions letter
- ☐ Decision notification letter if granted eVisa (student route application EU/EEA)
- ☐ Confirmation of Acceptance for Study letter (CAS)
- ☐ Sponsor letter (if you are being sponsored)
- ☐ If you are under the age of 18, a copy of your UK Guardian's details and Under 18 parental consent letter
- ☐ Evidence of your Secure English Language Test

Please visit the Welcome Hub for more detailed information on your arrival.

We can't wait to welcome you!

