



**ACROSS THE POND**  
STUDY IN BRITAIN • SINCE 2004

**A PARENTS' GUIDE**  
*TO STUDYING IN THE UK*

# WELCOME!

TO THE UK STUDY GUIDE FOR PARENTS



Studying abroad is an exciting prospect for any young person. Taking a leap of faith and studying away from their home country allows students to experience life in another culture, meet people from around the world, and encounter faculty and research facilities at some of the leading global universities.

Yet, the reality of moving to a different country, enrolling at a foreign university, and starting an adventure somewhere completely new can be intimidating. It's not just the students that are embarking on this journey, but also the parents- they too play a large part in the process (both emotionally and often, financially!). We speak with many parents of students who want to study abroad, and they often have some important questions to ask.

We have written this eBook to ease the minds of parents and students alike on the entire process. Not only does this eBook give an insight into the advantages of studying in the UK and how it can benefit a student's career, but we also break down information on the more practical aspects of moving abroad that you and your child will want to be aware of, including visas, costs and funding, safety, healthcare and keeping in contact with home.

“ Overall, we had a very positive experience with Across the Pond. We truly feel it made all the difference for our daughter and her admission to her University.

Cindy Schroeder

# HOW DOES ACROSS THE POND HELP?

Since 2004, Across the Pond has been providing free, personalized student advice and guidance to thousands of North American students looking to study at a UK university. Our team of UK Study Experts all have first-hand experience with studying in the UK and many used Across the Pond to help them do it. Whether it is applying to undergraduate or graduate programs at our partner universities in the UK, we use this wealth of knowledge to ensure each student is best matched in terms of their academic and personal goals.

We represent over 40 universities across the UK, and the students we work with benefit from a high acceptance rate to these institutions. We are able to offer a customized, free service because Across the Pond is funded entirely by our partner universities in Britain to represent them in North America.

We are confident that with our high level of personal guidance, students can maximize their chances of being accepted to some of the best universities in the UK – and the world! Our UK Study Experts' expertise and commitment are the cornerstone of Across the Pond, and it is because of these qualities that we continue to help students achieve their goals overseas.



## MEET THE AUTHOR

Considering a move to the UK to study is a pretty big step in your life, but there is no need to worry, I know exactly how it feels!

Hi, my name is Ashley Griffith, and I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, before attending the University of Essex to get my Master's in Literature.

Across the Pond made the entire process so simple that, before I knew it, I was living and studying in the UK. It turned into one of the most rewarding twelve months of my life, and I cannot recommend this opportunity enough to everyone I meet.

In this eBook, we will answer the frequently asked questions and concerns of parents and their students when considering the UK for their studies.

After reading, if you have any further questions, don't hesitate to visit our website at [studyacrossthepond.com](http://studyacrossthepond.com) and make an enquiry.

*Ashley*

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# BENEFITS OF EARNING A DEGREE IN THE UK

Seeing your child leave home for college can be hard enough but letting them go to study abroad can be even more difficult. Studying abroad may seem like a costly upheaval compared to remaining in the US. There are, however, a host of benefits to studying in a different country. But, why choose the UK...?

## TOP UNIVERSITIES

Firstly, the UK is home to many top universities, with sixteen of the UK's universities ranking in the top 100 higher educational institutions across the world (2015-16 Times Higher Education (THE)). Furthermore, out of 800 universities featured, 78 institutions are from the UK.

## THREE YEAR BACHELORS DEGREE; ONE YEAR MASTERS' DEGREE

Our UK partners offer three-year undergraduate degrees and one year graduate degrees. Although it might seem like students wouldn't learn as much as the longer degrees back home, the shorter degrees actually mean students can scrap the general classes required by American higher universities. In the UK, your student will focus on major coursework from day one.

## PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Not only will your child experience education from a prestigious institution, they will also benefit from professional exposure. British universities place a high premium on making students ready for the workforce immediately after graduating. They do this by equipping students with practical experience and through networking. The UK is the gateway to Europe and therefore opens up great international networking opportunities. While holding a degree from a British university is enough to make their resume pop, your child is also permitted to work part-time as a student in the UK, another chance to acquire international work experience.



## COST

Often the cost of studying in the UK is comparative or cheaper to studying in the US. Both the standard university fees, fluctuations in exchange rate and length of full degree programs play a part in the cost of UK education. In the UK, a high quality undergraduate degree can be achieved in just three years and a graduate degree in just one year, saving time and money. For more information on costs, see pages 10-13.

## MULTICULTURAL

The UK also offers a multi-cultural and dynamic place to study. Students will learn more about themselves, their opinions and beliefs studying alongside students from across the world. It's also not all about the time spent in academia; there is a wealth to be learned outside of the classroom as well. The UK is in an incredibly convenient location for students to travel cheaply to the rest of Europe, and beyond! Imagine how much learning your child will be able to do and the opportunities it brings for the wider family and friends to visit!

All of these experiences combined help students to stand out from the crowd when it comes to establishing themselves in their chosen career back home.



## HOW A UK DEGREE CAN BENEFIT YOUR CHILD'S CAREER

Our UK partner universities are all recognized by the US Department of Education and are a great segue to applying for jobs at home after graduating. North American employers look favorably at applicants who have studied overseas, especially at a renowned UK university. We hear it over and over again – “My UK degree got me in the door for interviews.”

Why? Because international education, exposure and, sometimes, work experience all encouragement the development of a variety of personal and interpersonal skills, such as independence, communication, critical thinking, adaptation and cultural awareness. These qualities make for an attractive candidate in any line of work.

UK universities welcome international students and find that their North American alumni show ease in finding employment and accelerating their careers as a result of their experience. Our university partners are also there to help students so that they can plan for their career ahead of degree completion. Career services are available throughout students' time at university, which we encourage students to use.

# COSTS OF STUDYING IN THE UK

This can be one of the biggest stumbling blocks for parents and students when considering the option of studying abroad. At first glance, tuition fees and living costs seem too great to be considered, but we are here to break it down and simplify it all. We think you will find it's really not as expensive as you might think!

In this section, we discuss:

- Tuition fees, funding and living expenses
- Accommodation costs
- Student banking in the UK

## TUITION FEES AND FUNDING AND LIVING EXPENSES

The cost of degree programs depends on a variety of factors: the university you choose, type of degree and subject. You will be pleased to know that US federal loans can be used to help fund your child's studies in the UK! Our partner universities offer various scholarships to which international students can apply. A few of them even offer scholarships that are available exclusively to Across the Pond applicants. [Enquire with an Across the Pond Advisor to find out more.](#)

Our financial discussion has to start with the length of the degree your child is pursuing. In the US, the typical Bachelor's degree takes four years to complete, although for many students these days, it takes five. We believe in a liberal education on this side of the pond, a broad education base which requires students to spend at least their first two years of higher education taking general education classes.

In the UK, they believe in getting to the point! Students essentially choose their major in high school and more or less stick with that subject for life. Because of



this early and prolonged focus on that one subject, British degree programs are shorter and students become experts in their subject sooner, making an undergraduate degree from England and Wales just three years in length, whereas it still takes four years in Scotland. (The American education system is actually modeled after the Scottish system.)

On average, an American undergraduate student will spend anywhere from \$90,000 to \$190,000, including their living expenses, on their four-year degree in the US. The cost depends on if they study in or out of their state at a public or private school. Despite that exorbitant cost, somehow you are still paying \$400 for the most recent edition of your Accounting textbook!

A typical US Master's degree takes two years to complete. On average, a grad student will pay anywhere from \$60,000-\$240,000, including living expenses for their degree, on top of what they have already spent for their undergrad. Talk about an arm and a leg!

In the UK, most Master's degrees are only 12-months long. This already takes a massive cut off tuition fees and living expenses in comparison to back home.



But, to put it all in perspective and view some figures, below we outline an idea of what undergrad and grad degrees in the UK could cost:

Subject Area	Undergrad Average Tuition	Graduate Average Tuition
Humanities/Social Sciences/Law	£ 14,000	£ 14,000
Business	£ 13,500	£ 15,500
Science/Engineering	£ 16,000	£ 17,000
MBA		£ 19,500

In terms of living expenses, we can provide you an easy lump sum because the UK Home Office provides this number for all international students. Depending on where students live in the UK, the living costs vary. Large cities, such as London, will be more expensive, compared to smaller university towns, such as Falmouth or Swansea. Expect to pay £12,000 a year outside of London and £15,000 a year inside of London; it's best to [speak to one of our UK Study Experts](#) for more detailed advice on specific UK areas.

To discuss cost another way, the most expensive undergrad degree you can get in the UK is a Bachelor's of Science from a London university. The total cost will pan out to around \$120,000. (Remember a four-year US Bachelor's costs anywhere from \$90,000-\$190,000.)

The most expensive Master's degree you can get in the UK is an MBA at a London university. The total cost will pan out to around \$45,000, cheaper than the cheapest Master's degree you can get in the States. Amazing!

## ACCOMMODATION COSTS

Students have the choice of living in university housing, or in private accommodation. While the choice is down to each individual, we recommend university organized accommodation, as it's all managed through the institution, with easier payment methods and includes no additional payments for utilities, taxes, internet costs, etc.).

The cost of university accommodation depends on a number of factors:

- Location
- Length of contract
- Inclusion of a meal plan
- Relative age of the accommodation
- Style of accommodation (dorm-type vs. apartment-style)

With these in mind, prices can vary between \$130 to \$350 per week. If you would like to find out more about accommodation at a specific university, please [contact one of our UK Study Experts](#), who will be able to advise you in more detail.

With private accommodation, many landlords want to meet students in person before leasing their space, along with requiring large upfront deposits, and sometimes need a British guarantor and/or a British bank account. We advise you pursue this route with caution.

## BANKING

Because international students are temporary residents in the UK, it may take a few weeks to open a UK bank account due to tight security measures. Additionally, federal loans are not disbursed until early October. Students should thus be prepared to bring around three weeks' worth of finances with them to the UK to tide them over. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash, and make use of travelers' checks and/or debit/credit cards. Once your child's bank account is up and running, it will be easy for them to work with their funds while in the UK.

[Speak to one of our UK Study Experts](#) and we can advise you further on how to go about opening a UK bank account, and explain all that is involved in the process.

# WHAT UNIVERSITY TO CHOOSE AND HOW TO APPLY

Across the Pond are partnered with over 40 of the top UK universities. Students have a vast choice from which to choose, and our UK Study Experts are at hand to help advise which university is best suited to the student. In the meantime, here is some useful information.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION:

When choosing a university, your child should consider many factors. Keep in mind the following considerations:

- University rankings
- Student satisfaction reputation
- Location (urban or rural, campus or non-campus based, access to airports etc.)
- Accommodation offered (catered/ part catered/ non-catered etc.)
- University support services (careers, health and wellbeing, spiritual etc.)

Once your child has chosen their preferred universities, it's time to get started on the application process...

## UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATIONS

Undergraduate applications use a system called UCAS, which is a centralized application portal for all applicants to UK undergraduate programs, including British students. For around \$40, your child can apply for up to five different universities, but they must understand how to apply correctly to be successful. This includes:

- Writing a personal statement geared to a British audience
- Understanding how his or her GPA and standardized test scores are viewed by UK universities
- Submitting a high school, college and/or university transcript
- Obtaining a reference letter



Across the Pond is an established UCAS center so we are able assist your child with their entire UCAS application and ensure it is filled out properly. UCAS was designed primarily for use by British students so there are some questions that can be confusing for US students who try to navigate it on their own.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATIONS

For graduate study, students are required to apply to the universities directly with a transcript, personal statement, two letters of reference and a resume. Each university operates their own application portal or form. The differences between them and the sheer time required to try and learn each type of portal can be overwhelming for students. At Across the Pond, we have developed our own simplified application form which students fill out instead. This way your son or daughter will only have to complete one application form and we'll do the rest of the hard work for them.

It is not an easy process applying for a university degree, especially when your child is scrambling to finish up their final year in high school or college. We help our students get their applications submitted quickly and efficiently, making the process as easy as possible.

# IMMIGRATION AND VISAS



Unless your child holds a valid British or EU passport, he or she will need to apply for a student visa in order to study in the UK. There is a lot of legal fine print to consider and the rules tend to change on an annual basis. Because mistakes are so easy to make, this is probably the most stressful part of the entire application process.

As there is so much to understand and work through, Across the Pond provides a breakdown of instructions and up-to-date procedures for students to follow through webinars, online guides and personalized advice. Our visa help is the one area where past students express the most gratitude and satisfaction. Please [enquire](#) with us to find out more.

In the meantime, make sure your child's passport will not expire while living in the UK. It is possible to renew their passport in the middle of a program, but it is a hassle, so we strongly encourage students to renew their passports now if it will expire before completing their degree.

If your child doesn't have a passport yet, that's okay – just make sure they have one by the end of spring and are eligible to apply for a visa in the summer. Students **MUST** have a passport in order to submit a visa application.

# SAFETY AT UNIVERSITY



One of the main concerns for parents is the safety of the university and town where their child will live. Of course, in any country there are places that are more safe than others, but generally the UK is known to be a safe place to live and study. You can always ask your child's universities for their specific safety precautions around campus. All of our partner universities have emergency call boxes, all night university transportation and so on.

We only want the best for the students we work with, therefore, we have some useful tips to take onboard when moving abroad...

- If students are going out in the evening or late at night, they should ensure they have organized a way of getting home (such as saving a taxi number in their phones, or noting down which night bus number to catch)
- Possessions should be insured either under travel, house, or university accommodation insurance
- Accommodation or house keys should be kept somewhere secure (e.g. a zipped/ fastened pocket)
- Photocopies of all personal ID cards should be kept in a secure place (including copies of students' visa confirmation letters and passports)
- Emergency contact numbers such as 999 (for police, fire brigade or ambulance) and 101 (to report an accident or non-emergency)

Although some of these points might be a little worrisome to consider, they are important points to note in preparation for an unexpected situation. This advice is not unlike what American universities would advise as well. There are different customs for emergencies in every country, so it's useful to know them for the country where your student will be living!

# HEALTHCARE

## FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Healthcare in the UK is a whole other ballgame to the US. The National Health-care System (NHS) in the UK provides UK residents access to full healthcare for free, plus subsidized dental and prescription coverage.

Covering your child on your healthcare back home is NOT sufficient for their time in the UK; should anyone fall ill when studying abroad, this won't be enough for healthcare in the UK. But there's no need to worry; during the Tier 4 Visa application, your child will pay a small fee known as the NHS surcharge, to cover healthcare while living in the UK. This is non-negotiable and must be done before moving abroad. So, before even moving away, your child's healthcare is nearly sorted.

During your child's orientation (or 'Fresher's) week at university, they will have the chance to sign up for a GP (General Practitioner) – a medical doctor who will treat and provide prevention and health education care to patients outside of a hospital.

As a non-EEA (European Economic Area) National, students will qualify for the full NHS treatment if:

- Their program lasts more than 6 months
- Their program lasts less than 6 months and are studying in Scotland
- Their program is less than 6 months long, and the government is funding at least 35% of the program. Depending on the circumstances, this may not include GP treatment.



With this in mind, international students can receive:

- Some emergency treatment (but not follow-up treatment)
- Family planning services
- Treatment of certain communicable diseases
- Compulsory psychiatric treatment

With only a small fee of £8.50 for any prescriptions they need during their time in the UK, it's good value. Students are encouraged to see their doctor before leaving the country to obtain copies of any medical records that might be beneficial for their new UK GP to have. For example, students should ask their home doctor to provide a list of all medications and the reason each was prescribed.

Please note that we can't advise students on bringing any prescriptions over from the US. If students are on any medication, check with your doctor about the process of transferring medications. The health surcharge that students have paid when completing their visa application will give access to the NHS and ensure a happy and healthy stay while studying in the UK.

# KEEPING IN CONTACT FROM ACROSS THE POND



For parents, it is vital you can easily speak to your child when they are abroad. It's also important that your child knows how easy it can be to get hold of you and friends back home. It's likely that there will be times when your child feels a little homesick or needs some advice. Luckily, today there are SO many different ways to keep in contact.

Not only can you use social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, to keep up to date with what your child is doing, there are also more personal ways to communicate:

- **Whatsapp** – an app which you can use on your phone, and on a computer (using Whatsapp Web), includes free messaging and calls using Wi-Fi or online data
- **Facebook Messenger** – connected to Facebook, the instant messaging platform is now also open to calls over Wi-Fi or online data
- **FaceTime** – only available on Apple devices, video calls are available via Wi-Fi or online data
- **Skype** – much like FaceTime, however it is open to other devices, such as Android and Windows devices. The platform includes instant messaging, and video / voice calls via WiFi or online data, or you can also top up your Skype account to use it like a normal phone without internet

To find out more about keeping on contact with loved ones when studying abroad, read our blog: [Keeping In Touch With Loved Ones Back Home On The Cheap](#).

# ACROSS THE POND

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# Next steps...

We hope the information included here gives you reassurance about the possibility of studying abroad in the UK.

Across the Pond work with students who would like to either study an undergraduate or graduate full degree, or semester long programs. If you or your child would like to speak to one of our UK Study Experts, please get in touch. We make the process of applying to UK universities simple and straightforward, and we are there every step of the way!

## DISCOVER

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STUDYING IN THE UK:

- Official partner to over 100 UK universities
- FREE personalized university selection support
- Funding information



## APPLY

GET FREE PERSONALIZED GUIDANCE THROUGH THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

- Personal statement guidance
- We apply to multiple universities on your behalf
- We handle your application paperwork



## PREPARE

GET HELP WITH EVERY ASPECT OF PREPARING TO STUDY IN THE UK:

- FREE advice on accommodation and travel
- Visa requirements
- FREE workshops and "Pre-departure guides" available

START TODAY