



Predeparture Guide 2020



BEST OF LUCK!

Going to study in the UK is an exciting experience and we know that you will have many questions. This guide is designed to help answer some of your questions and provide you with information that should be useful throughout your time in the UK.

The information in this guide should be read alongside any pre-departure materials and emails you receive from your university. Please be sure to follow any instructions that your university gives you in its guide.

In addition to pre-departure materials, all our university partners offer introductory orientations for international students at the beginning of term. These programs will introduce you to the campus, your department, other students and the local area. We encourage you to participate in these programs, as they are a great opportunity to meet other students and will help you settle in and adjust to life in the UK. International student advisors at your university will be available throughout your studies to listen to your concerns and give you advice on a wide range of issues. If you find yourself experiencing any problems whilst in the UK, please don't hesitate to contact your university's International Office, as they will be happy to assist you.

We hope you find the information in this guide helpful – please do let us know if you have any additional queries.

Best of luck with your studies in the UK!
We hope you have a brilliant time!

Sincerely,

The Across the Pond USA Team



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YOUR ADVENTURE

Let's start by stating the obvious: you are about to begin one of the most transformative and challenging adventures of your life so far. Whether you've studied abroad in the past or are new to living overseas, your trusted student advisors have taken care to put together this handy pre-departure guide based on our own experiences living as international students in the UK.

We've assembled this to be a helpful resource you can print off and keep within reach whenever you have a question (especially those questions you feel silly asking!). Some bits of information will be more relevant to you than others — that's how we've designed it. This is everything we would've liked to know before we skipped across the pond ourselves! We want you to be prepared, and that's why the most useful bit of advice we can give you is this: do everything you can to get things in order so your trip abroad goes smoothly, but be prepared to be surprised. And what is an adventure without some surprises?

This guide is intended to supplement the information your selected university will provide you in the weeks before your departure. We want you to be prepared, but remember to leave some flexibility in your plans for the unexpected. This is your international adventure story, and it's completely unscripted. Learn what you can from those who have gone overseas before you, but take hold of the time you have in the UK. Live in the present. Be prepared for the unexpected moments. They'll likely turn out to be your fondest memories.

Right. Now to the serious, less inspiring stuff.

My degree was worth every penny spent. Not a day goes by that I don't think about or feel thankful for my year in England.

Alex D.



Never in a million years could I have imagined that I'd be studying for my master's degree in London, and yet here I am!

Celisa W.



Being surrounded by unique people from various countries around the world, with different stories to tell, life experiences, and backgrounds have helped me gain new perspectives on life.

KeyAna W.



Establishing amazing and lasting friendships with people from all over the world is something I will cherish forever and often reflect upon.

Claire C.

ACCOMMODATION

Your arrival in the UK will be made easier if you arrange your accommodation well in advance. There are two possible options available to you:

1. Universities offer a wide range of university-owned-and-operated accommodation to suit a variety of needs and budgets, including catered and self-catered options with ensuite and shared facilities. Choosing university accommodation is the easiest way to arrange your accommodation in advance. Your university should have already sent you information about accommodation options and the application process. **If you have not received this information, please contact your Across the Pond Advisor and check your university's website for their accommodation section. Often uni's will have a special section for international student accommodation.** If you would like to apply for university accommodation, please ensure that you submit your application before the specified deadline, usually sometime in July/August. A deposit may be required to secure your place in university accommodation.

In most cases you may stay in your student accommodation over the Christmas and Easter holidays; however, there may be an additional fee for this so please be sure to review your housing contract. Contract lengths vary by university and halls of residence, so we would encourage you to check this prior to arranging your accommodation.

2. If you do not want to stay in university campus accommodation, then private accommodation is the next best option. The best way to go about

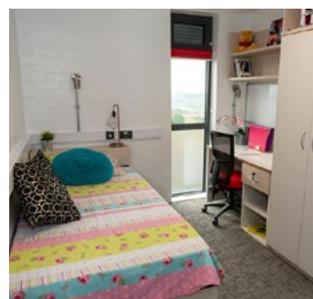
finding suitable accommodation is by contacting the Accommodation Office at your university as they will be in the best position to direct you to appropriate resources for finding private housing.

The housing office should also have a list of students who are looking for private accommodation and want to share a **flat**¹ – so you can easily find flatmates! If you do choose to live off-campus we encourage you to research thoroughly before leaving your home country, as it can take some time to find housing once you get to the UK.

A NOTE FOR POSTGRADUATES

Many postgraduate students have concerns with on-campus housing – noise, the party scene, freshers (first-year undergraduates) – and, desiring an atmosphere more conducive to study, seek off-campus housing instead. While this is understandable, rest assured that our universities are also aware of the vast differences between undergraduate and postgraduate students and **try to accommodate postgrads in their own buildings on or near campus.**

Please consider on-campus, postgraduate housing options before seeking private accommodation as you'll find it is often the least expensive option for the quality provided and also much easier to arrange. On-campus housing often comes with many inclusions that private accommodation cannot afford – internet access, contents insurance, a gym membership, utilities, a community of other students, etc.



To avoid being suckered into a **dodgy**² deal, be sure you always consult your university before signing any rental agreement and that you are aware of the terms of your contract. Some letting agencies in the UK may use some terminology for letting (renting) private accommodation which might be new to you as a North American (e.g. 'bedsit' is commonly used interchangeably with 'studio', though a bedsit might have shared restroom or kitchen facilities). The point is that you should be sure to carefully consider all options before paying large sums of money in deposit, and **be aware that some landlords do request large sums of money** - we've seen anywhere from the first three, all the way to the full 12, months of rent up front. Problems with accommodation can be very stressful, but if you carefully consult with your university's Accommodation Office, you'll likely have a smooth experience.

1. This is the first of many British words and phrases scattered throughout this document. 'Flat' means 'apartment'.

2. Suspicious, not to be trusted

YOUR FIRST WEEKS IN THE UK

The UK is home to many international airports and offers excellent transportation links, including the National Rail Service and many local and national **coach**³ services. Many universities offer **'Meet & Greet' services at major airports and train stations, which we highly recommend you use.**

It is not only a great way to easily get to your destination, but also a chance to make a few friends when you first arrive. Your university will provide detailed information about the best way to travel to campus well in advance. However, if you are still in need of assistance, your Across the Pond advisor will do their best to help.

ARRIVING IN THE UK

No matter how **knackered**⁴ you look or feel, when you reach Immigration & Customs, the officer will request to see a copy of your documents, which may include the following:

- Valid passport, with visa/UK entry clearance
- Original documents to prove financial support for tuition & maintenance
- Original offer letter from the university & CAS form

- Details of your destination - address/telephone number
- Official transcript and diploma

Though you may not need these at the border, you must bring school-issued copies of any academic documents you used in your uni application. Many unis require these documents at registration.

A NOTE ON E-GATES AT UK AIRPORTS

In effect from 20th May 2019 travellers from the following countries will be able to use eGates: **USA**, Canada, Australia, South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, and Singapore.

Nationals from these countries entering the UK either as a visitor or as a Tier 4 student, will no longer be required to speak to a Border Force Officer on entry to the UK.

Visitors and Tier 4 students who use the eGates will not receive a stamp in their passport. A visitor is someone who is entering the UK primarily as a tourist. If you are coming to the UK to study for less than 6 months, you would not be classed as a visitor but as a short-term student.

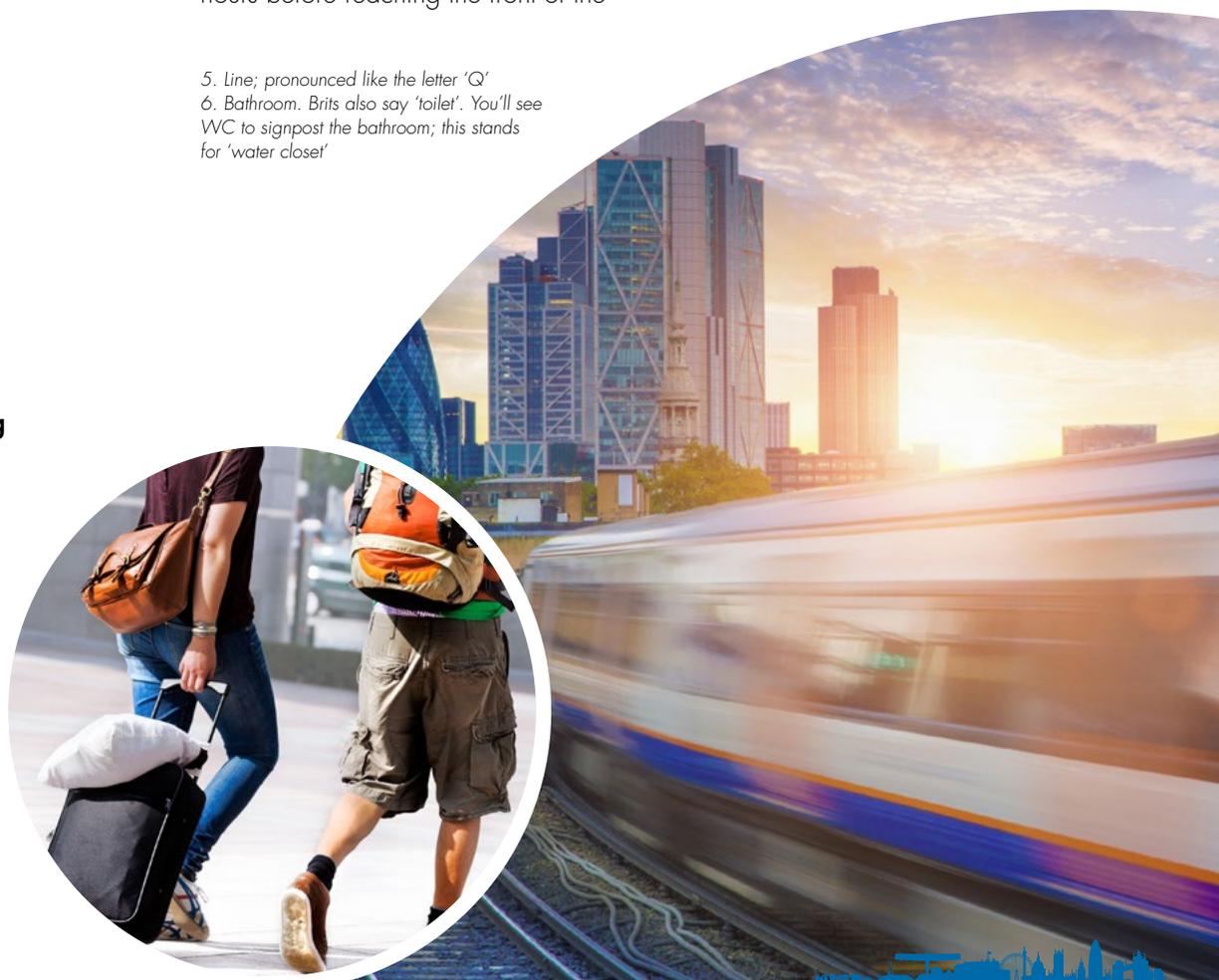
If you are a Tier 4 student (from the countries listed on page 10): You can use the eGates but you must retain evidence of your boarding pass as the University will request to see a copy of this when registering you as a student.

[Click here for more information](#)

Bear in mind that the wait at immigration may be quite extensive. Occasionally, students have had to wait for 3+ hours before reaching the front of the

5. Line; pronounced like the letter 'Q'
6. Bathroom. Brits also say 'toilet'. You'll see W/C to signpost the bathroom; this stands for 'water closet'

queue⁵. Unfortunately, there is no way to determine how long the wait will be, so use the **loo**⁶ before you queue! You will want to ensure you eat the meal provided before landing (or a snack that you bring on the plane) and stay well-hydrated. Have some reading material or other entertainment at the ready that is not electronic.



3. Bus - 4. Exhausted

REGISTRATION

As international students your applications have been dealt with electronically. Whether you or your home university mailed documents to Across the Pond, the documents were scanned and uploaded to your initial application.



As a good rule of thumb - if the document is listed on your CAS, it should also be to hand when you are *in* the UK. If you do not currently possess hard copies of these documents, now is the time to order them.

But, **Bob isn't your uncle yet!**⁷ As the Home Office requires universities to review original hardcopies of these documents, your university will do so at registration, after which you will be permitted to enroll in classes. You will receive specific guidance from your university regarding registration; it typically happens during orientation or the first week of classes. Your uni will specify what documents you need, but based on past experience you will almost certainly need the following:

- Official transcript
- Diploma
- Diploma translation, if in Latin or another language.

Often your home university will be able to issue a translation, so check with them first. You will also need this for the visa application.

- Proof of funding document (more applicable for the UK border, but best to have just in case)

7. A take on 'Bob's your uncle!' meaning, "There ya go! All set."





BANKING IN THE UK

It is important that you **sort**⁸ your finances before coming to the UK. Opening a UK bank account can take time and patience, as different banks have slightly different procedures. As international students are temporary residents in the UK, banking facilities are provided on a restricted basis.

Due to tight security measures it can take a few weeks to open a UK bank account. In order to make this period less stressful for you, bring enough money to cover your first two to three weeks in the UK. However, most universities recommend you do not bring more than £500. **This is especially important for students receiving federal loans, as these typically are not disbursed until late September/early October.**

Try to avoid carrying large amounts of cash; use travelers' checks and/or a debit/credit card. Depending on the bank, you may not be able to open an account until after you arrive, so the debit card will be very important in the meantime.

TAKE ACTION BEFORE COMING TO THE UK:

- Make a tuition or accommodation pre-payment where applicable. **DO NOT**, however, make more than a £1265 down payment on accommodation; current visa regulations will only acknowledge a sum of £1265 or less on the CAS. You **MUST** show evidence of having the rest of your funds. If you are receiving funds from US loans, you **should** receive a notice of loan certification from the uni in the summer.

- Speak to your bank in the US to see if they have any partnerships with a UK bank that could make it easier to open an account there.
- Find out if you can use a debit card from your home bank in UK ATMs (also called "cash points" or "cash machines") and whether there are any associated service charges.

AVOID ANY CLANGERS!⁹

In order to open a UK bank account, you will need to prove you are you. In most cases, you will be asked to present the following documents:

- Passport
- University offer letter with your home address
- University accommodation contract (or a copy of your lease if you are living in private accommodation)
- A letter from the university confirming current address in the UK (can likely be obtained from student office, library or similar)

HORSES FOR COURSES¹⁰

'Freshers' Week' (the very exciting and popular week before classes) will provide the opportunity to compare the different banking options available to you. Banks will likely be on campus advertising their services, and in many cases you will receive a free gift when you open an account. Be sure to speak to different banks as they may have different amenities. Some banks charge international students monthly just for having a bank account, while others do not. Our advice: **choose the best bank for your needs!**

DYNAMIC CURRENCY CONVERSION – JUST SAY POUNDS!

Many foreign vendors or cash machines will often offer you the supposed convenience of converting a purchase to dollars rather than charging you in GBP. This is referred to as **Dynamic Currency Conversion**. During a transaction, you will always be given the choice, but the cheapest route is to **charge in pounds** as the conversion fees can be quite expensive. While most banks and credit card companies will charge variable fees for foreign transactions, these fees are often less expensive than the Dynamic Currency Conversion fee. If you are making a large purchase, paying a deposit, etc., you can save quite a bit of money by checking on these fees.

OVERDRAFT

A loan, valued from £100-£1,500 that you **must** pay back after completing your studies in the UK. Some banks will offer this. It is best to use an overdraft for **EMERGENCIES** only as your debt can quickly accumulate and many overdrafts are no longer interestfree!

8. Take care of, fix
9. Avoid any mistakes or blunders
10. To each his own

HEALTHCARE

There's a chance you'll be struck with a loathsome **lurgy**¹¹ or sorrowful **sicky**¹² whilst in the UK. But never fear - the UK has a subsidized health service called the National Health Service (NHS), which provides free health treatment for people who are residents in the UK.

As an international student you are *also* entitled to **NHS treatment** if you meet one of the following conditions:

- You are enrolled in a UK institution for six months or more
- You are a national or resident of an EU (European Union) country

If you do qualify for NHS treatment, you will need to pay the **NHS Health Surcharge** before you will be able to submit your visa application. The surcharge must all be paid upfront. You can find detailed information about this and the exact cost based on your program length in the "Across the Pond Visa Guidelines" document that your advisor sent in early June. If you did not receive this contact your Across the Pond advisor.

! All international students are required to pay for prescription medication, as the NHS does not cover this. Prescriptions issued by a doctor currently incur a charge of £9.00 per item (as of July 2019)

However, if you are **not** entitled to NHS treatment you will be asked to pay the full cost of any treatment you receive, including emergency treatment (cost is similar to that of medical treatment in the US). As this can be very expensive, you are advised to take out a medical OR life insurance policy before you leave the United States.

If you are taking prescription drugs, undergoing medical treatment or have had serious illnesses in the past, you may want to ask your home doctor to write a letter explaining your history. This will help to ensure you receive the best possible healthcare whilst in the UK. Plan to bring enough of your prescription with you to last your first few weeks in the UK. If you are studying for more than 6 months, you must register with a **General Practitioner**¹³ shortly after you arrive. All our partner universities have healthcare Centers on campus, and they will provide you with a list of local doctors. These practitioners may even be available during Orientation,



which makes registering easier. No matter what, it is your responsibility to ensure you are registered.

DENTISTRY

The NHS will not cover your dental visits; however, dental visits in the UK are typically affordable. Please see the NHS page for [dental visits](#) for more information.

CONTENTS INSURANCE

Things get **nicked**¹⁴ in the UK, same as anywhere else. **Sod's Law**¹⁵, if you are living in a university-owned Hall of Residence, though, your **bits n' bobs**¹⁶ should automatically be covered, up to a certain value. Further information about this can be obtained by contacting your university's Accommodation Office. You can opt to have additional insurance, particularly if you want your electronic items to be covered while you are travelling, **but this will probably not be needed.**

If you are living in private accommodation, you should insure your personal property against loss or theft as soon as possible. Be sure to review the premium carefully to see what is covered. Cost and coverage can vary, depending on where you live and the worth of your possessions. As a guide, cover for £4,000 worth of possessions in private accommodation costs approximately £90 to £150 a year.

14. Stolen

15. Another version of Murphy's Law - 'What can go wrong, will go wrong!'

16. Various things

11. Illness - 12. Another term for illness - 13. Local doctor

LIVING IN THE UK

ELECTRICITY

British electricity is different to North American as it works on 240volts/50 cycles and most sockets take 13 amp, square-pin fused plugs. If you are planning to bring electrical equipment with you, purchase an adapter before you leave. You can usually buy these at chain drugstores or order online (Amazon). While you can purchase these in the UK, stores tend to run out of stock the first few weeks of school. You **MUST** ensure any electronic equipment you plan to use is dual voltage - if an item is single voltage you will likely damage it permanently and even cause a fuse to blow.

Laptop chargers are usually dual voltage, but double check. Converters are often not effective, so it may be safer to buy things like flat irons, blow dryers, etc. in the UK - there are reasonably priced options at pharmacies like Boots.

A note on fire alarms - often if you are found at fault for setting these off in dorms you will be charged a fine, usually 50 **quid**¹⁷ or so. Dorm fire alarms tend to be very sensitive, and **ciggy**¹⁸ smoke isn't the only reason things could go **pear-shaped**¹⁹. A blown fuse from a single-voltage flat iron or even a steamy shower with the bathroom door open could trigger the alarm. Keep a window open if ironing or drying hair to avoid the fine (and the awkwardness of having everyone in your dorm evacuated!). And, of course, you should not smoke in dorms anyway.



Some housing is over a hundred, if not hundreds of years old, so there can be problems inherent with age that Americans may not be accustomed to.

WATER

Some universities (and areas) will have very specific guidelines about water usage. If you are living in an older dorm, the water tanks may be quite old. In such places, you should not drink from the hot water **tap**²⁰ as they may still be made of lead. If you need to use the hot water tap, boil the water for five minutes before use, especially if you are outside of hot water usage times (some universities, Durham and Newcastle Universities in particular, have specific times for hot water usage). Your dorm will have signs and guides with official policies so be sure to follow those guidelines very carefully.

17. A pound, equivalent to the American 'buck' - 18. Cigarette, also referred to as a 'fag'
19. Become a disaster - 20. Faucet

Whitby, England



The Peak District, England



Bodiam Castle, Sussex, England





! To ring a UK number from an American phone, first dial: 011 (the American exit code), then 44 (the UK's country code), and drop the beginning 0 from the UK number. Example: 011 44 XXX XXX XXX.

To ring another UK number internally, simply dial the full phone number (including the 0 at the beginning of the number). Example: 0700 000 000



! If you are living in a rural area, check which mobile providers cover your residence hall before you purchase. If a residence hall is miles out of town, only one service may be usable in that area. Choose wisely!



POSTAL SERVICE

Post Offices can easily be found in the UK with many universities also offering postal services on-campus. Most Post Offices are open from 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday and 9am-12.30pm on Saturday, although some small offices may have more limited hours. Inland mail can be sent either first-class or second-class; the cost varies depending on the weight and size of the envelope. First class mail is generally delivered the following day and second class takes a few days. You can buy stamps from the post office and many local shops; supermarkets and newsagents sell booklets of stamps. International stamps can only be purchased from a Post Office. Post travelling to North America from the UK usually takes about 1-2 weeks, but times will vary. Therefore, if you need to send mail to the US, be sure to plan ahead!

TELEPHONE SERVICES

Telephone services are provided through a number of public companies, including British Telecom (BT) and Virgin Media. Unlike in North America, you are charged for both local and long distance calls. There are public payphones available across the UK, though they are decreasing in number, and their rates are often very high. To stay in contact with friends and family in North America, utilize international mobile plans, **Skype**, **FaceTime**, **WhatsApp** etc. – the Internet helps to close a lot of the communication gap!

Skype works well so your relatives and friends back home can give you a **bell**²¹ and have a **blether**²². To **ring**²³ North America, you will need to dial 001 followed by the area code and phone number. If you already have an unlocked **mobile**²⁴, you may be able to use it quite cheaply overseas by purchasing a SIM card. Check with your local service provider before coming to the UK.

If you cannot use your current cell phone in the UK, you can buy a fairly inexpensive one after you arrive. Very basic phones can be quite cheap! Some mobile services even offer deals on international calls. You will need to decide if you want to purchase a pay-as-you-go plan or a contract. Like in the US, pay-as-you-go plans are cheaper up front, but you'll need to **top up**²⁵ your minutes/data. Contract plans have cheaper calls, but tend to require more of a 2-year commitment. Contract phones also often require a credit history in the UK to qualify, which North Americans generally do not have.

Shop around to find the plan and phone that's best for you. Emergency Services (Fire, Police, and Ambulance) can be reached by dialing **999**. If you are living in a dorm you can also contact the front desk, but naturally, in an extremely urgent situation, it's best to call 999 first! 911 will also work if you are using a mobile only.

21. Call you - 22. Scottish for 'have a chat' - 23. Call - 24. Cell phone - 25. Fill up, top off





SMOKING

In 2007, the UK undertook a complete smoking ban in public places. Make sure you take note of any non-smoking zones in public areas (e.g. lecture theatres, cinemas, buses and even your accommodation); otherwise a fine may be imposed.

TIPPING

Tipping is less common in the UK than in North America, though in some cases you may wish to leave a tip. It is not a requirement to tip in taxis, but it is customary to round up to the nearest pound on metered taxi journeys, more as a convenience to both passenger and driver. If you have a meal in a restaurant, first check if a service charge is included in the price. If the charge is included, you do not need to leave one. If not,

10% is usual. In most cases, you are not expected to tip a bartender.

TRAVELLING WITHIN THE UK

No, you don't need a car! Most parts of the UK have excellent transport networks, including local bus, rail, underground and tram services. There are few places that you cannot reach with some form of mass transit. If you are under 25 years of age, we recommend you buy a '16-25 Railcard' (£30). This card offers a **dead brilliant**²⁶ discount of 33% off the price of Standard Class rail services.

The card pays for itself after 3 or 4 trips! If you are over 26 and in full-time education, you are also eligible to apply for this Railcard. Your university Student Services Centre will provide you with more information. Many places also offer

similar discount deals to students or long-term passes on public transportation. For example, buying a year-long pass for the local bus or underground network could save you money in the long-run. Be sure to look for these and ask your university about various student travel options.

TELEVISION LICENSE

In the UK all televisions must be licensed if you plan to watch any live television. There are various ways to purchase a license, and the cost is approximately £150.50 a year for a color TV. You can be heavily fined for having an unlicensed **telly**²⁷ (including those in halls of residence) so it's important that you purchase a license if you buy a TV. You will also need a television license, even if you don't have a TV, if you wish to watch live or recorded shows on network sites, such as BBC, iPlayer, Sky Go. You

won't need a license however if all you intend to do is stream from subscriptions services, such as Netflix, Amazon, or Disney+.

COUNCIL TAX

This is a local government tax to pay for local public services, and the amount charged is determined by the value of the property. Full-time students registered for more than 6 months, and everyone under 18, are not charged Council Tax. Furthermore, students living in a Hall of Residence are exempt from paying Council Tax. If you are living in private accommodation and you receive a Council Tax bill, you should contact your university's Student Services Centre for assistance. Do be aware, however, that if you live in private accommodation with a non-student, you could be asked to pay part of the bill.

26. A particularly Scottish phrase that means 'exceptionally good'

27. British slang for television

SHOPPING

From Monday to Saturday, most shop opening hours are 9am-5.30pm with local shops often closed on Sundays. Most city center stores and large supermarkets are open until 8pm at least one night a week and some large supermarkets offer 24-hour shopping six days a week. Unlike in North America, tax (VAT) is already included in the price.

FOOD: GROCERIES

There is a wide range of supermarkets in the UK, and many unis have food shops on-campus, which are ideal for last minute items, though these will typically be more expensive. For your weekly food shopping it is more cost-efficient to visit one of the large supermarkets listed below. Most campuses are within walking distance or a short bus trip away from these establishments.

POPULAR GROCERY STORES IN THE UK:

Availability can vary by city or region

Asda asda.com	Essentially the UK equivalent of Walmart, Asda is particularly useful for bulk purchases of food and other items
Booths booths.co.uk	A staple in Northern England since 1847, Booths offers finer food items and focuses on food quality
Mark's & Spencer marksandspencer.com	Something of a universal UK treasure that offers a Simply Food line, which is slightly on the upper end of the grocery scale. You'll find more than food here, like department stores in North America
Morrison's morrison.com	An inexpensive grocery chain found across the UK. Several larger stores have a café that offers breakfast/lunch/dinner options
Sainsbury's sainsburys.co.uk	A mid-range grocery store, quite like ones in North America, that sells both its own range of foods and commercial food products. Tighter budgets can purchase Sainsbury's Basic products, while a more gourmet appetite can purchase Signature products.
Tesco tesco.co.uk	The popular inexpensive food option. Like many UK grocery stores, customers can purchase inexpensive clothing items, books, and other non-food products at the bigger chain stores. It is also quite common to see Tesco Metro stores, which are smaller and offer basic products for the customer on the go.
Waitrose waitrose.com	An upper-market grocery store that largely sells own-brand products. While it may not be ideal for the weekly bulk shopping on a student budget, it does have a variety of finer foods for a treat.
Aldi and Lidl aldi.co.uk / lidl.co.uk	Discount stores where you can find all your basics - usually the cheapest option.





FOOD: RESTAURANT AND CAFÉ CHAINS

One of the best aspects of visiting a new country is the chance to discover new foods and new favorites. In case you want to go out for a good **nosh** ²⁸ with your new **mates** ²⁹, there are a number of chains particularly popular with students that you will see in the UK:

All Bar One	allbarone.co.uk
Café Rouge	caferouge.co.uk
Caffé Nero	caffenero.com
Costa Coffee	costa.co.uk
EAT	eat.co.uk
Giraffe Restaurants	giraffe.net
Gourmet Burger Kitchen	gbk.co.uk
Greggs	greggs.co.uk
JD Wetherspoon	jdwetherspoon.co.uk
Leon	leonrestaurants.co.uk
Nando's	nandos.co.uk
Prêt	www.pret.co.uk
Pizza Express	pizzaexpress.com
Prezzo	prezzorestaurants.co.uk
Slug and Lettuce	slugandlettuce.co.uk
Wagamama	wagamama.com
The West Cornwall Pasty Company	westcornwallpasty.co.uk
YO! Sushi	yosushi.com
Zizzi	zizzi.co.uk

28. Go out to eat - 29. Friends, buddies, pals



CLOTHES

The price of clothes varies greatly in the UK. Shops such as **Primark**, **TK Maxx**³⁰, **H&M** and large supermarkets, like **Asda & Tesco**, have very inexpensive clothing lines. More expensive options like **Topshop** and **TopMan** are also quite popular. Department Stores, such as **Selfridges** and **House of Fraser**, are generally the most expensive. Shops tend to have great sales a few times a year (e.g. January sales), so look out for those. Many clothing stores in the UK provide a student discount (usually around 10%) so it is worthwhile to carry student ID.

When packing for the UK ([see Packing Tips](#)), we suggest bringing a reasonable amount of your favorite items and doing laundry frequently. Some clothing items will generally be less expensive in North America, particularly quality denim, so you may wish to pack these. If you're interested in clothing trends, however, the UK is known for being a leader in "fast fashion". Your time in the UK could be an opportunity to update your look for relatively reasonable prices.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

It is best to take the same safety precautions in the UK as you would living in a major city in the US. If you have any safety concerns or issues, be sure to get in touch with your university's resource staff, which is there to assist you. Many universities have 24hr campus security and shuttle service available at night to be sure

to check to see what is available at your university!

Also note that the emergency number in the UK is **999** and if you want to contact authorities when it is not urgent, the number is 101.

OTHER ESSENTIALS

There are several good places to pick up a range of essential items cheaply. You will find kitchenware, bedding and electrical goods at **IKEA**, **Argos**, **Primark**, and **Wilkinson**; personal hygiene essentials at **Boots** and **Superdrug**. For bargain items, the UK has shops similar to North America's Dollar Store called **Poundland**, **Poundstretcher** or **Quality Save**.

If you want key essentials in your dorm upon arrival, past students have used **click2campus.com** and **unikitout.com**, and most have been satisfied with them. They deliver packaged items to many UK dorms, but **make sure you confirm when your residential hall can start receiving packages**; many unis won't hold items more than a couple of days, so plan accordingly. It is worth looking at your specific uni's individual guidelines for pre-departure, as they may have their own advice for purchasing these items or they may provide bedding for a reasonable price.

For both food and other last-minute essentials, campuses also have shops where you can buy daily items, saving you that trip into town. Just note that they may mark up their prices a bit, so it is worth planning in advance if possible.

30. The equivalent of TJ Maxx in North America



Ensure that you work a job that is permitted for international students in the UK. Most jobs are, but there are some limitations. You may not be self-employed or employed as a sports professional, entertainer or doctor/dentist in training (unless you are on a relevant course). You may not take up a permanent full-time job as a student.

WORKING IN THE UK

As an international student in a full-degree program, you are permitted to work up to 20 hours per week during term and full-time during the holidays. If studying below degree level, you can only work a max of 10 hours a week. **The number of hours permitted will be listed on your visa.** Please note that, if you are studying at the master's level, the summer may not technically constitute a break as you're expected to work on your dissertation. **You can find a part-time job by consulting notice boards around campus, advertisements in newspapers and job centers and visiting your uni's careers office. They are always happy to help, and even offer advice on your CV/resume!**

When considering a part-time job, think about how much free time you want to have outside your studies and social commitments. Successfully completing your course must be your top priority whilst in the UK.

Everyone who works in the UK must have a National Insurance Number (NI# or NIN) issued by the government. It keeps track of your income tax payments and National Insurance (social security) contributions. You can apply for an NI# during Orientation week. It is vital that you follow all work rules to the letter of the law, as even a slight infraction can lead to deportation. If in doubt, it is worth asking your uni's international and/or careers office.

See **UKCISA's** webpage regarding **employment in the UK.**



SPORTS IN THE UK

Sports are a very popular pastime and hold a prominent position in the UK, especially **football**³¹. At the very least be aware of particularly significant matches and popular teams. Football and rugby are national winter sports, and cricket is the national summer sport.

FOOTBALL

Indeed, football is such an important part of British culture that we encourage you to go to at least one **match**³². You can attend a match for a major football **club**³³, like Manchester United, Arsenal or Chelsea, where you can expect major crowds and a pricey ticket, or for less money and a more intimate feel, think about Rochdale AFC, Oxford United, and Exeter City. Football fans are very passionate! This is generally a good thing, but sometimes passions can escalate. Avoid loud support of any team until you're safely inside that team's section. If you are attending a match and supporting the away team, **mind**³⁴ the colors you wear when going to a pub pre-match or post-match. Pub owners have been enthusiastic enough to kick out the away team "offender"! Best to wear a **jumper**³⁵ until you get to the stadium.



There are separate entrances for "home" and "away" spectators, so make sure you choose the right spot! If you just want to see a match without choosing sides, purchase a home game ticket and sit in that section.

CRICKET

We also encourage attending a cricket match. It's not essential to understand the complicated rules of the game, but it can be an enjoyable way to spend a day. It's closely compared to baseball, though they are entirely different games. No need to stay the whole match as traditional test cricket matches can last for days; however, there are now short-form cricket matches one could attend as well.



If you hear about "The Ashes", they are referring to a longtime rivalry Test cricket series between England and Australia. Be ready to hear about the results of this year's The Ashes Test matches, as they are happening now!

RUGBY

There are two types of rugby in the UK – rugby league and rugby union. Both are quite popular. Union is more popular internationally as more countries play it, but League is very popular in England (especially in the North!) and Australia.



Rugby league is the simpler version to understand; rugby union is more complex and moves at a slower pace. Rugby union is a 15- man game, while rugby league has 13 players. The arguments regarding union vs. league can be controversial as many of them stem from perceptions of class. You may wish to attend a match for each type and judge for yourself!



31. Soccer in the US – the North American sport of football is referred to as 'American football' in the UK.

32. You will almost never hear anyone say they went to a football game.

33. Or team

34. Be careful of or pay attention to; in Scotland, it means 'remember' – 'Do ye mind (mynd) her name?'

35. Sweatshirt



STUDYING IN THE UK

REGISTRATION

Your uni will send details of how to register in the summer, but in most cases, registration takes place on-campus during **Fresher's**³⁶ Week. Depending on your program and level of study (undergraduate or graduate), you may be able to register for optional **modules**³⁷ in addition to your compulsory modules.

! If you don't hear about registration until September or thereabouts, don't worry! This is very common.

Many universities will require you to bring original documents to campus— particularly transcripts and diplomas. This is to fully confirm your candidacy as a student per the Home Office requirements, especially since your application was made online and the unis would not have seen your hardcopy documents yet.

If you do not have hardcopies of your transcripts already, we highly recommend ordering them from your home uni or high school to bring to the UK. If your diploma is not accessible (e.g. framed very nicely!), again, ask your school if they can provide an additional copy (this can usually be done for a reasonable fee). **While not every UK uni will require this at registration, the majority do. It is safer to be over-prepared than under-prepared.**

BRITISH HIGHER EDUCATION

You will experience several different methods of teaching and learning in the UK. You will be trained to read broadly around a topic and research it thoroughly, to reflect on the ideas you have encountered and to analyze and describe them. Your **timetable**³⁸ may include lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops and laboratory or studio sessions.

As British higher education places a large emphasis on self-teaching and independent learning, expect to spend a significant amount of time working autonomously outside the classroom. **Instead of a syllabus, you will be given a 'suggested reading list', which is actually mandatory.** You will be expected to take notes, research, write and **revise**³⁹ outside of formal teaching and come to class prepared for discussion. This is especially true at the postgraduate level.

Postgraduate advisors and supervisors will be ready to help, but you will have to plan your learning, deciding how much time to invest and which learning methods suit you best. **You are encouraged and expected to be an active and independent learner.** At the undergraduate level there will be plenty of opportunities to interact with fellow classmates and professors, including seminars and tutorials. These venues allow for discussions in smaller groups. Remember, professors always have regularly scheduled 'office hours' and they expect you to visit. Discuss your coursework with them or ask any questions you may have about the course.

! UKCISA further elaborates on these key points on their [Study Methods webpage](#).

36. The UK word for "Freshman" or First year student

37. Classes or courses - 38. Class schedule - 39. Study

TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS

The main types of teaching are lectures, seminars, and tutorials. Your course may also have a strong emphasis on practical work, portfolios and workplace training. Every course requires a lot of independent study and written work. In fact, you will most likely find that you **spend less time in the classroom than you're used to**. You may only have to attend classes a few days a week, but this does not mean your coursework is a **doddle**⁴⁰; indeed, it will be rigorous, and the expectations will be high. **There is a stronger emphasis on independent study in the UK**, and you will be expected to keep up with your work, even if you are not reminded about it.

Furthermore, you may have only **one or two major assignments per semester**; these therefore count for a large percentage of your final grade. Plan ahead! For instance, your first major assignment may be due in November; this may feel like **donkey's ears**⁴¹ away, but in fact, the time goes very quickly. Therefore, it's important that you understand your coursework from the beginning. **If you feel lost the first week, say so**—it's important you keep up! Your lecturer will have office hours; take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions and make direct contact.

PRINTING

When printing, note that UK unis do not use the standard paper size we are used to in North America. They use size A4 so change your printing settings accordingly to avoid poor formatting issues. Also, note that there is a charge for printing (usually 5-10p⁴² per page) even at the graduate level.

Your uni may require you purchase a special printing ID or prepay for printing online. If you are printing something with images, make sure to compress your images to an optimized printing format, as printing large files can severely slow down printing—stressful for you, and an inconvenience for your peers. Sod's Law again — **if you try to print something at the last minute the printer almost always will jam, so plan ahead**. You may also want to track when the printing areas are quietest to avoid the panic of competing for a printer.

40. Easy, a cinch

41. Ages or a very long time, it is Cockney rhyming slang for 'years'.

42. Short for 'pence'

LECTURES

These are the largest classes you will be in; at the undergraduate level as many as a hundred students. Classes typically last no more than 1-2 hours. Your lecturer will address your subject as you take notes. The lecture encompasses main review of a topic and involves less discussion.



SEMINARS

Small groups with a discussion focus that usually lasts 2-3 hours. Debate is highly encouraged, and you will be expected to come prepared to discuss. You may even need to give a presentation to show your understanding of the topic. For example, a seminar may be based around a key text you're reading for a course.

TUTORIALS

More intimate, small group sessions that aim to give structured guidance for projects/papers, provide feedback on previous assignments, and/or provide guided assistance for any problems you have with course material.

PRACTICAL WORK AND TRAINING

Your course may include lab hours, mandatory field trips, performances, or workshops. If your course is professional in nature, you may be required to have a placement and/or be supervised in a professional environment for your practicum.

WRITTEN WORK

All courses have written work components, including essays, shorter writing assignments, dissertations, and project proposals. Creative or work-based courses will also have a fair amount of writing. Become familiar with your department's written work policies and be extremely careful about citations.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

While the methods used to assess your work may be similar to that of universities in North America, the grading system will likely be very different. In most cases, you will be graded on a scale of 0-100% with most students receiving marks between 40-70%. **Unlike in North America, a grade above 70% is viewed as extremely high** and only a small percentage of students are awarded this grade. In terms of degree classification, students are awarded one of the following based on their overall average:

1:1	First class – 70+%
2:1	upper 2nd class honours – 60-70%
2:2	lower 2nd class honours – 50-60% 3rd (third) – 40-49%

Many graduate programs will assess students based on the following scale:

Distinction	70% or higher
Commendation/Merit	60-70%
Pass	50-59%
Fail	Grade lower than 50%

As long as you keep up with your reading and you attend class, you should do well. Your acceptance to the university is an indication that they believe you have the academic ability to perform well in the program. If you do the work you are assigned to the best of your ability, you will be just fine! If you feel you are struggling, however, notify your lecturer as soon as possible. Time can move very quickly, and you don't want to just start seeking help too late.

UKCISA has created a great new website with study advice for international students planning UK study. The website even has interactive exercises that reinforce essential study tips in the UK. See the [useful website section](#) for this guide.





OUR EXPERT PACKING GUIDE

HELPFUL TIPS!

- Use a travelling or camping backpack as your carry-on. It not only holds a lot, but is very convenient when travelling during school breaks.
- Rolling clothes military-style takes up less space in your luggage.
- Pack some clothes you're okay with tossing out at the end of your studies/travels since you'll most likely buy new clothes while there.
- Use space-saver vacuum-pack bags when packing – it's amazing how much more you can get in (downside: a heavier bag since you can pack more).

CARRY-ON PACKING ADVICE

Here are some of the few things to stock in your carry on for immediate use on arrival:

- A couple of granola or energy bars (if you take a night flight and have to travel by train, etc. upon arrival, you might want an extra snack item handy)
- Download the Tube Map app if you are going to London
- Train schedules/times if you are going to access train travel immediately after you land
- A map of your destination city - most larger city maps can be acquired for free from the AAA/CAA
- The necessary documents that you need at the border including:
 - Valid passport with visa/UK entry clearance
 - Original documents to prove financial support for tuition & maintainanc
 - Original offer letter from the university & CAS
 - Details of your destination - address/telephone number
 - Official transcript and diploma
- A pen
- Extra passport photos – you'll need them for transportation passes and program or institution information
- You should photocopy all of your official documents twice: one copy should stay at home, with your loved ones, the other set should travel with you. Put your official copies in your carryon and keep your set separate from your actual official documents in your suitcase. If something happens (i.e. you lose the original or have the documents stolen), you can still provide the necessary information to your embassy to get the materials replaced.



WHAT TO PACK:

General clothes

- In some regions you can experience three “seasons” in one day so be sure to bring several types of clothing you can layer.
- 2 or 3 pairs of pajamas and slippers.

Winter Clothes/Items

- In order to maximize space in the suitcase, don’t bring too many sweaters and hoodies. Wear one (or two) on the plane, pack a few more, and buy the rest there. These can be vacuum packed.
- Same with boots, wear a pair on the plane and pack a pair of another color. Buy snow or rain boots in the UK, as they are very heavy and bulky. Also, make sure your boots are of good quality, especially if you live in big, walkable

cities, like London. They will tear apart shoes that are cheaply made.

- Small umbrella, a few scarves, 1-2 pairs of gloves (you can also plan to buy these there)
 - **Note:** if you are going to a uni that is an older institution, and you know it has an old-school architecture library (like Durham or Leeds), or you are in London and might access the British Library, take a pair of cheap cotton gloves and cut the finger-tips off. This will keep your hands warm but allow you to work. Some of the older libraries can be unbearable in the winter.
 - Socks, leggings, hose/tights, long-johns and other undergarments take up little space, especially if rolled or stuffed in empty spaces. No need to skimp on these!

Winter Coats Specifically

- Wear your favorite winter coat on the plane and buy further coats or jackets once in the UK. These tend to take up a lot of luggage space. Or, think about having your parents ship these to you, as it gets colder.
 - **Note:** A winter coat in Dallas, Texas, for example, does not equal a winter coat in Buffalo, New York. The former would NOT be suitable in the UK, but the latter would. Wool is great against the damp/chill, but waterproofs are crucial. Parkas are not the best items in terms of winter coats.
 - Again, WATERPROOF is crucial. Invest in a quality rain jacket (long trench-type) once you are in the UK. Soft-shell jackets can also be a great investment as they provide protection from the rain

and a bit more warmth than a normal rain jacket for use throughout the winter.

- It’s also worth noting the annual lows for the region where you’ll be studying; many Americans from the East Coast or Midwest won’t find it necessary to bring their normal “winter” coat. In these instances, bring whatever you would wear for November or March back home. Of course, this all depends on you and what you consider cold.
 - If you plan to go home for Christmas break (we recommend you stay to experience a UK Christmas!), consider bringing your winter coat back then. That way you can decide whether you will really need it for a “UK winter” or not. Also, use this time to switch out heavier coats and warmer fall sweaters with some spring/summer clothing.



WHAT TO PACK:

Electronics

- Laptop and a few movie favorites – if you buy a laptop in the UK, your US DVDs won't work unless you change the region settings.
 - **Note:** If you buy UK DVDs, you can only switch back and forth between region settings a limited number of times.
 - **Note:** Consider bringing an external hard-drive so that pictures and other files from your trip overseas can be saved without slowing down your computer at all. Especially for graduate students, you will likely be saving a ton of pdf files and articles during your dissertation studies so you don't want to risk running out of space on your computer.
- Camera

WHAT TO PACK:

Body products/Hair products

- Travel-size toiletries and feminine products to tide you over until you can do some grocery shopping (unless you're very particular about the products you use; then you might need to consider how to keep yourself supplied for the year).
- If you need a hair dryer, curlers, or a straightener, ensure they're dual-voltage. Otherwise, it may be easiest to purchase these once you're in the UK. They can be quite affordable at a Boots or Superdrug.
 - **Note:** Dual-voltage items aren't always a fail-safe solution, unfortunately. Even these have been known to short out.
- On that note, UK stores do not stock all the same hair styling products as we do in the States. Pack 1-2 extra bottles of your favorites. (Great idea for care packages, too!)
 - **Note:** Try checking UK drugstore websites, such as Boots or SuperDrug, to see if they carry your brand. These can sometimes be cheaper than back home!
- Extra cosmetics - some items (dermatological ones in particular) that are ordinary in the US can be prescription-only in the UK, if they're available at all.
 - **Note:** Not only may some products be unavailable, some products can be almost double or triple the price!! (Five dollar mascara can be £10 in the UK, which can be as much as \$15!)

Health Products

- Small first-aid kit
- Prescription meds or pain killers, if necessary.
 - **Note:** These need to be in your carry on, in the original bottle. Plus, you have to have a doctor's note explaining why you take them and have the original prescription, in case border control asks.
 - **Note:** The laws in the UK regarding over-the-counter meds are far stricter than in the US. Many items including heavier pain-killers (such as ibuprofen) are available in the UK only via an Rx. Check the Boots store online to see if what you normally stock is, in fact, something you can buy over the counter. If not, stock up and take it with you.
- Glasses, glasses case, and sunglasses
- If you have contacts, bring extra and enough pairs until you get back home (if possible).

WHAT TO PACK:

Mementos

- Pictures of friends and family – you may get homesick
- Address book of contacts, at home and abroad
- Reading material – a few favorite books you want to read

Miscellaneous Items

- Small sewing kit, especially those with extra buttons, a few needles and thread
 - **Note:** Consider a multi-tool Swiss Army Knife and a camping knife-fork-spoon if you plan to travel or backpack a lot. Obviously, don't take the multi-tool on the plane!
- Plug adaptors, at least one for when you land/before you can buy additional locally.
 - **Note:** Your local Tesco or Asda may be out of adaptors those first weeks of school when international students flood the city.
 - **Note:** Most adaptors available from airports, etc. would only work for North American three-prong plugs so if you have anything that only has 2-prongs (such as phone chargers) they can short-out or be difficult. For North Americans, we recommend picking up a couple of the NA-UK specific adaptors from Ryman Stationary (common and cheap stationary supply shop in the UK).
 - Specific plug adaptor for your laptop – Macs especially have a global adapter kit you can buy for your power plug, which is not only handy for the UK but handy for travel abroad once you're there.
 - Bring a good travel guide that includes the different countries you want to visit, although you can find and bookmark much of this information online these days, i.e. blogs or The Lonely Planet.
 - **Note:** For London, the London A-Z is a great resource.
 - Bring enough money for the first month as UK bank accounts can take a while to open and if you are using loans, the first disbursement can take weeks. Americans can use debit cards to take money out (notify your banks!)

WHAT NOT TO PACK:

• School Supplies

You can buy all your school supplies during Freshers' Week (British for Orientation). Leave it all (or most of it) at home!

- **Note:** Wait to buy your course books until you arrive.



WHAT NOT TO PACK:

- Leave your shoe closet at home. Sneakers, 1-2 pairs of comfortable flats that match a lot of outfits, and dressy heels are enough for starters. You can buy more in the UK.
- Too much of any one thing – repeat this motto over and over to yourself: “You don’t need as much as you think!”

UNIVERSITY PRE-DEPARTURE AND STUDENT SERVICES

There are international pages on each UK university's website that can be visited for information regarding international fee payment schemes, arrivals to the UK, and travelling to the university. Some universities even offer airport pickup services. For more information and advice, please review these webpages for your university. If you are unable to find these pages, ask your advisor and they can assist you in finding the right information.

Once in the UK, you can check with student support services on campus if you run into any issues with your programme or accommodations.



TRAVELLING ABROAD WHILE ABROAD: A BRIEF GUIDE

You will most likely want to take advantage of the opportunity to travel to other countries while in the UK. This is a wonderful idea! There are many budget airlines, which allow you to get to mainland Europe for rather decent prices. You can get a return ticket to places like Italy, Spain, and Germany for as low as £100, depending on the time of year. You can also take Eurostar to certain places in mainland Europe. While Eurostar is generally a bit pricier, if you plan ahead you can get quite a discount on the ticket cost.

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW WHEN TRAVELLING AS A STUDENT:

1) Due to the increased strictness of the Home Office, it is very important that you bring proof of your course when travelling to another country. In addition to your passport, you should have your Biometric Resident Permit (BRP Card) with you. It is also wise to have a copy of your acceptance letter and official proof of your dorm address—something that indicates you fulfill the requirements of studying in the UK. If you consistently use the same bag or suitcase, acquire a

second copy of such a letter and leave it in the bag.

2) If you are flying to and from Ireland, you will not pass through Border Control on your return. Since this wouldn't be your first entry this should not ordinarily be a major issue, but hold on to your boarding pass/tickets in case you are asked about this trip at any point. In fact, we suggest keeping a file of all journey-related documents in case they are requested at any juncture.

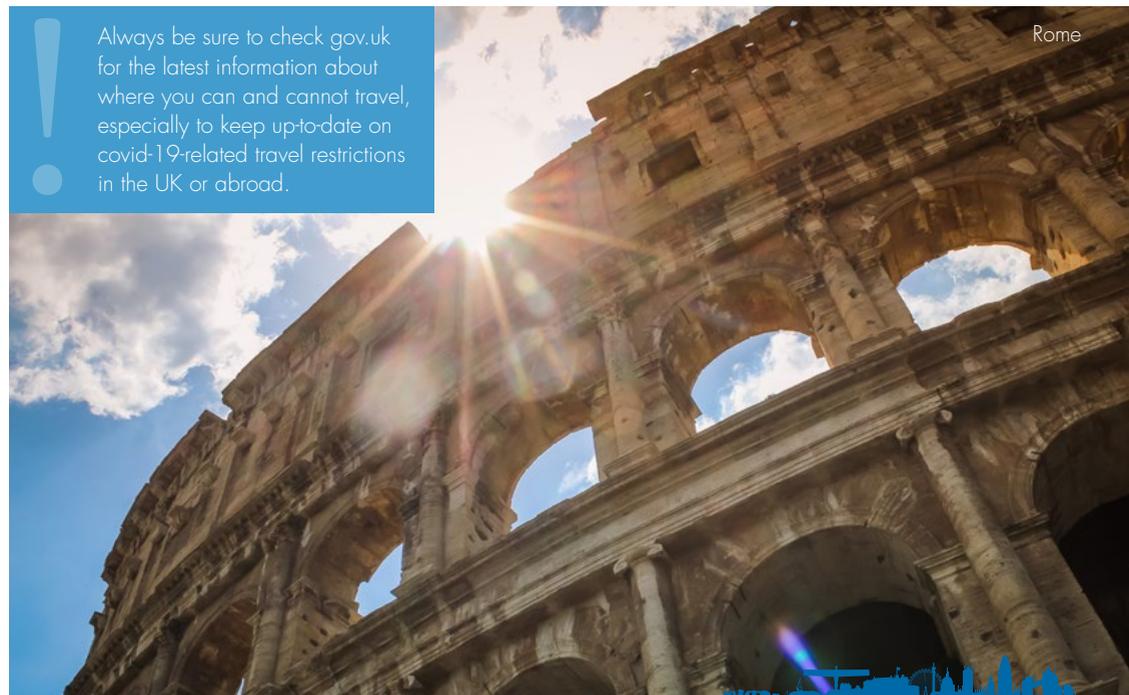
PLANNING

While there is nothing like an adventurous last-minute trip, keep in mind that thousands of students may have the same idea as you, and flights and hostels can book quickly. It's worthwhile to plan at least two months ahead (though two weeks is better than two days!). It is best to wait until you know important course due dates at the beginning of the year; once you know your schedule, you can plan your trips around these responsibilities.

It tends to be more fun, and safer, to travel with a group of friends. You may want to plan a meeting where you decide where to venture at different points of the year. Be aware that school breaks, while a great time to travel, are also when it can be trickier to make bookings. If your class schedule permits long weekends, this may be a great option for you (though, of course, get your work done first!).



Always be sure to check gov.uk for the latest information about where you can and cannot travel, especially to keep up-to-date on covid-19-related travel restrictions in the UK or abroad.



GETTING THERE

You may prefer to fly to most places, as it can be the quickest (and even cheapest) means. See our Useful Websites section for cheap airline options.

You may also wish to visit countries by rail. This is a wonderfully classic approach to travel—many consider it a vital part of the European experience!



Eurostar: Very fast trains to certain parts of Europe (Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands). Can be pricy, but usually have good student deals.

Eurail: Europe has many train systems—much more than North America. If you plan to travel a lot in one or more countries, there are many Eurail train pass options. Their website will also assist you as to which trains would be best for your destination.

PLACES TO STAY

There are many budget hotels and hostels throughout Europe. Hostels are very popular and present a fun opportunity to meet even more people from different countries. In most hostels, you will almost always share a room with others, and very likely share it with at least two people you don't know. If you are going the hostel route, you really should book with at least one friend for safety. If you are going as a group, you may be able to book an entire room (or at least most of it). The more beds in a hostel room (usually 4-12), the less expensive it is but also the trickier the dynamic.

While some sort of bedding is usually provided, you may prefer to bring your own pillowcase and a light sheet, just in case. Bring small toiletries and flip-flops for the shower. You should also purchase a combination lock; there are usually lockers in each room, one for each resident. Do NOT leave valuables in the room while out and about, and make sure you have your passport.

These cautionary words aside, hostels are usually quite fun and build fantastic memories. There are few other places where you can make new friends with someone from Paris, the Czech Republic, and Brazil all in one go!



The website [hostelworld.com](https://www.hostelworld.com) rates hostels, so look at the rankings and comments. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but the feedback from students who have stayed there are even more important! You will generally want to aim for a hostel with a high “grade” percentage AND a substantial amount of reviews. The website also suggests small hotels, B&BS, and even apartments. These will generally be nicer (though not always – look at reviews!) but more expensive. If you're staying in a hotel, you can use [TripAdvisor](https://www.tripadvisor.com) as well.

If you are doing a last minute trip, you're in luck!
You can use [lastminute.com](https://www.lastminute.com) to see what is available.

PACKING

Again, pack light! While many airlines have great prices, **they keep their prices low by having strict luggage limits**. Any luggage over that limit will incur a fee of £10-15 GBP. [RyanAir](#), for example, allows only **one** 10 kg bag with maximum dimensions of 55cm x 40cm x 20cm in the cabin. They do **NOT** consider laptop bags or purses to be a personal item so this needs to fit inside the cabin bag too! If they deem your bag too big at the gate you will be charged £50. If you know in advance that there's no way you can shrink your luggage down by that much, you are better off paying the baggage fee in advance.

If you're determined to keep it to one bag, think about the essentials—jeans that are re-wearable (consider wearing one pair on the plane); non-bulky shirts; dresses that don't wrinkle. Don't be afraid to do laundry, and wear your bulkiest shoes on the flight. Shoes take up so much space!

Also, when dressing, be aware of significant cultural differences in dress at your destination. This may not be an issue in many of the countries you'll visit, but, for example, if visiting churches in Rome, do NOT go in with bare shoulders. Some countries may have different dress expectations for women, so be aware of those.

AWARENESS

Be sure to research the country you plan to visit. Be somewhat aware of current political and cultural goings-on. Consider registering with the embassy of the country you are visiting; it is very unlikely you'll accidentally be involved in some sort of uprising or catastrophic event, but just in case something goes wrong it is best to have your presence accounted for.

Awareness does not have to address major events; the little things count as well. You may want to acknowledge a country's favorite football teams, for example, or learn about their basic eating and drinking customs. Of course, you're visiting a country to *learn* about their background (and to have fun), but it helps to be prepared! You may want to learn a few "getting around" phrases in case you get lost, or even if you want to order a coffee. Chances are you will be corrected, but people tend to appreciate one trying to speak the language!

THINGS TO DO

Really, the opportunities are ENDLESS and vary from country to country. Bear in mind that lots of countries have student discounts, so if you show your student visa you'll often get discounted or even free entry to museums. You can also register for an ISIC card that proves that you are a student (this is actually great for the UK as well!): www.isic.org.

There are many guides to Europe but here are some great ones:

1. Frommers: www.frommers.com
2. Lonely Planet: www.lonelyplanet.com
3. Fodors: www.fodors.com

You can search these guides for activities, food, culture, and accommodation – basically, anything that you need to know!

We hope this quick guide is of help! Have lots of fun - and let us know if there are any "must-sees"!

- *The Across the Pond Team*



IN CONCLUSION

If you are having difficulty with anything or you need to speak with someone about a personal issue once you've arrived in the UK, the **International Office** and the **Student Welfare Office** are there to assist you so don't hesitate to make use of them! Staff are well-trained and have experience dealing with a wide range of problems – big or small. Don't be embarrassed or worried about asking for help.

If for whatever reason you are not happy with the help available on-campus, you can still [e-mail your Across the Pond advisor](#), and we will do what we can to help.

Again, the **best of British to you**⁴² in the UK!

Sincerely,

The Across the Pond Team



! We would also like to hear from you every couple of months. Send us a little e-mail every now and then and let us know how you are doing!

⁴². Good luck! This phrase is short for "best of British luck".

USEFUL WEBSITES

British Council www.britishcouncil.org

Discount Travel (to/from the UK) www.statravel.co.uk

London Transport Information www.tfl.gov.uk

UKCISA www.ukcisa.org.uk

(guidance on all aspects of being an international student in the UK)

UKCISA Student Immigration

www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information-Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Student-immigration-the-basics

Low-cost airlines (UK & Europe):

• www.ryanair.com

• www.easyjet.com

• www.flybe.com

• www.bmibaby.com

Currency Converter – www.oanda.com/currency/converter

Tourist Information – www.visitbritain.com

National Union of Students – www.nus.org.uk

International Students House Events – ish.org.uk

Coach & Rail Services:

• www.thetrainline.com

• www.nationalexpress.com

• www.megabus.com

• www.nationalrail.co.uk

• www.scotrail.co.uk

FOLLOW OUR BLOG

Our blog is a collaboration between the Across the Pond advisors and our students that have gone on to study in the UK! Articles are written by both the advisors and current students who share their experiences about living in the UK, and what they think you should know when you go to study there yourself!

Interested in becoming one of our student ambassadors?

We will be recruiting students to write for us for the 2020/2021 year, so watch out for more information from your advisor!

WE LOVE TO BE SOCIAL!

Follow us for more information, tips, and all things British!



We have Facebook groups where you can connect with other Across the Pond students starting in the UK this fall! For [Undergraduates](#) and [Graduates](#).



All information stated in this publication is believed to be true and correct at time of publishing. However, changes to circumstances after the date of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information.