

# HOW TO STUDY IN THE UK

Find out how you  
can study abroad  
in the UK with your  
Edexcel and BTEC  
qualifications from  
Pearson



# INTRODUCTION

Are you about to complete your Pearson BTEC or Edexcel qualifications?

Are you thinking about continuing your education at a university in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland)?

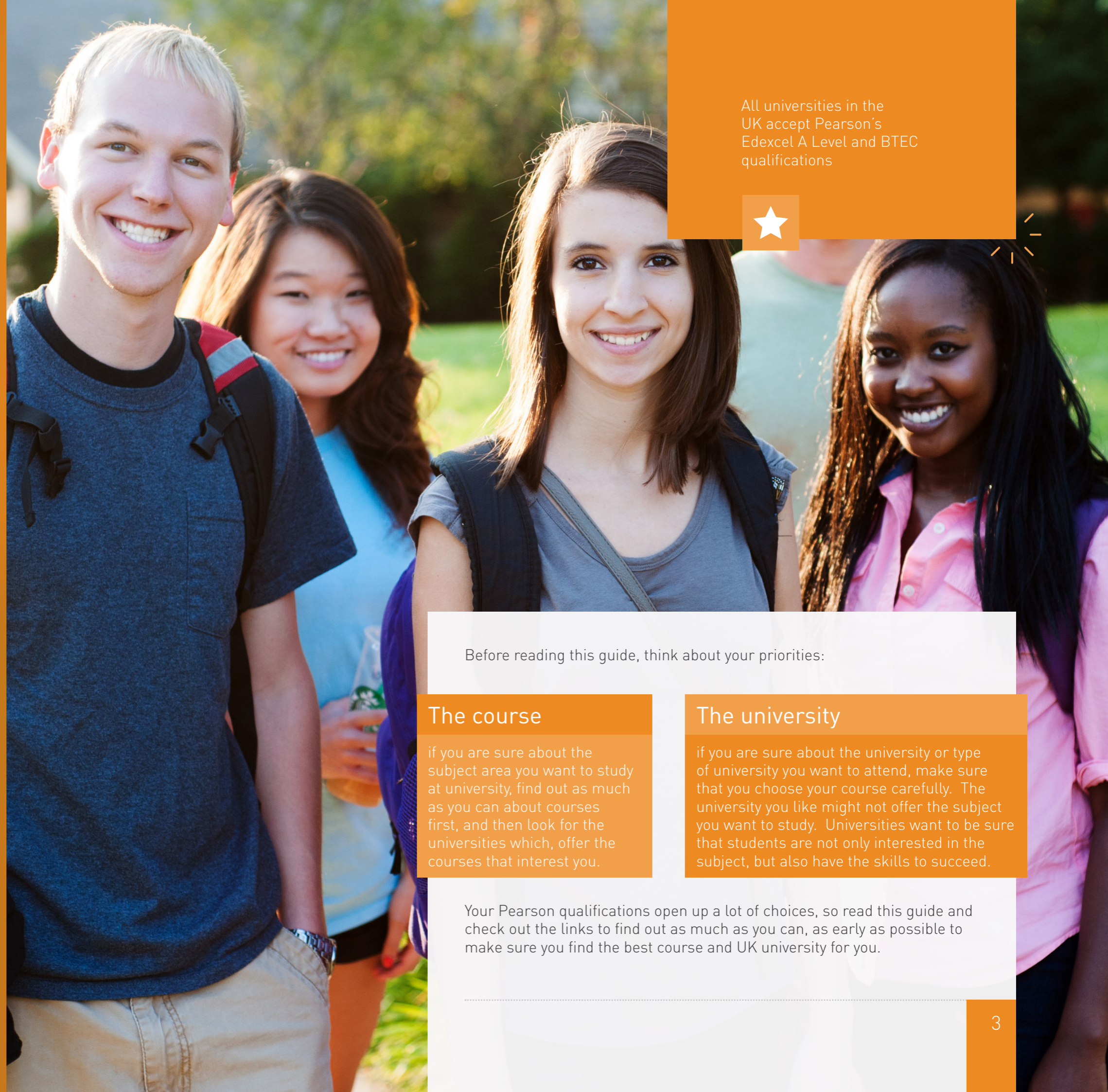
You may find the thought of moving to a new country exciting but perhaps a little daunting. It needn't be.

Over 430,000 international students from more than 180 countries choose to study at a UK university because they want to gain a degree that is valued and respected by employers and higher education institutions all over the world.\* Standards of excellence for degrees set by the UK's oldest universities go back hundreds of years. Today they are benchmarked against the best in the world and cross-referenced to those within the European Credit Framework.

The UK is a safe, friendly and welcoming destination for international students. The higher education system has a lot of flexibility. Students can choose from a range of options to suit their needs in terms of the types of courses offered, study options and assessment methods.

This guide outlines the steps you need to take on your journey towards gaining your first degree and provides further information to help you choose what and where to study and what you might expect when you start your course.

\*Data taken from HESA 2014-2015



All universities in the UK accept Pearson's Edexcel A Level and BTEC qualifications



Before reading this guide, think about your priorities:

## The course

if you are sure about the subject area you want to study at university, find out as much as you can about courses first, and then look for the universities which offer the courses that interest you.

## The university

if you are sure about the university or type of university you want to attend, make sure that you choose your course carefully. The university you like might not offer the subject you want to study. Universities want to be sure that students are not only interested in the subject, but also have the skills to succeed.

Your Pearson qualifications open up a lot of choices, so read this guide and check out the links to find out as much as you can, as early as possible to make sure you find the best course and UK university for you.

# UNIVERSITIES IN THE UK

Every year young people from around the world choose to study at university in the United Kingdom, making it the second most popular destination for international students after the United States.

Not only is the UK home to some of the world's most established and respected universities, it also offers students the opportunity to develop their English, experience a historic yet modern country and live in a safe, culturally diverse environment.

There are over 100 institutions in the UK called 'universities.' There are also an additional 45 colleges which can award their own degrees but do not have 'university' status, either because they are too small or too specialised. The most important thing is that an institution has the power to award degrees. A list of these institutions can be found here:

> [www.gov.uk/check-a-university-is-officially-recognised/recognised-bodies](http://www.gov.uk/check-a-university-is-officially-recognised/recognised-bodies)



## UNIVERSITY GROUPING

When most people think of UK universities the first two institutions that usually come to mind are Oxford and Cambridge. Although these two universities do not have a partnership, they are often grouped together as 'Oxbridge'.

They are the UK's oldest universities, with Oxford's origins going back to the 11th century and Cambridge back to the 13th century. They are usually (although not always) ranked as the top two universities in the UK. If you're thinking of applying to either of these universities you should note that they have a different application timeline (the 15th of October instead of the 15th of January). This is explained in more detail in The Application Process (page 20 onwards).

Many UK universities with similar features have formed groups with shared aims. These are called "Mission Groups." The various mission groups in the UK are:

### RUSSELL GROUP

the 24 universities in this group are research-intensive; they include some of the oldest universities which continue to have an impact on social, economic, and cultural developments worldwide. For more information visit: [russellgroup.ac.uk](http://russellgroup.ac.uk)

### MILLION+

the 19 universities that make up this mission group come together as a "think tank," publishing research reports and policy papers to advise the government and other agencies. For more information visit [millionplus.ac.uk](http://millionplus.ac.uk)

### UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE

this mission group's 19 universities focus on their work with employers and the partnerships they have established with industries. For more information visit [unialliance.ac.uk](http://unialliance.ac.uk)

There are other categories of universities in the UK including:

### Specialist –

a university that focuses on one subject area (e.g. Guildhall School of Music and Dance, the Glasgow School of Art, the Royal Veterinary College)

### Private –

universities that are not funded or regulated by the UK government (e.g. University of Buckingham)

## SCOTLAND

The Scottish university system differs from the rest of the UK in that most degree courses are four years in duration. The majority of Scottish universities will grant advanced entry for A levels students; so provided you meet the entry requirements, you might enter into a two year course with your A level qualifications.

A lot of Scottish degree courses are integrated Bachelor and Master's degrees. So don't be alarmed if you see that a Scottish degree is 5 years in length. You will probably receive a Bachelors Degree and a Master's Degree in these 5 years.

## RANKINGS

Universities in the UK (and world-wide) are ranked to help you make an informed decision based on various criteria. There are several publishers that rank UK universities in general, as well as by subject:

- > The Times (log-in required) - [www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/gug](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/gug)
- > The Guardian - [theguardian.com/education/universityguide](http://theguardian.com/education/universityguide)
- > The Complete University Guide - [thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk)

If you wish to broaden your research to see how a UK university ranks worldwide, look at:

- > Times Higher Education - [timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings](http://timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings)
- > QS - [topuniversities.com/university-rankings](http://topuniversities.com/university-rankings)

These sites provide ranking lists as well as further information on the university.



UK government research shows that international students with UK degrees achieve significantly higher salaries after they graduate, on average, than if they had been educated in their home countries (Tracking International Graduate Outcomes, BIS).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tracking-international-graduate-outcomes-2011>

Find out more about the great value of higher education in the UK

<http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/get-great-value-for-money/>

## HOW DO THESE PUBLISHERS RANK UNIVERSITIES ?

Each publisher has its own criteria to rank universities, which is why a university will rate differently on each list. The various criteria used to create ranking lists, include:

- > Teaching
- > Research
- > International outlook
- > Career prospects and employer reputation
- > Student to staff ratio
- > Satisfaction with course
- > Satisfaction with teaching
- > Entry standards
- > Spend per student
- > Value added

If you are interested in a particular subject, you might want to focus more on the ranking for that subject rather than where the university ranks overall.

## HIGHLIGHTS



There are three university mission groups in the UK (The Russell Group, Million+ and the University Alliance). Check out their websites to understand if this is important to you.



Universities in Scotland differ from universities in the rest of the UK.



Universities are ranked on a yearly basis, both generally and by subject area.



The Times, The Guardian and The Complete University Guide provide the most reputable UK university rankings.

# CHOOSING A SUBJECT

Whilst selecting the UK university where you would like to study is a major decision, choosing the right course for you is arguably more important. You have a lot to think about, such as the subject, type of degree, entry requirements, duration, type of assessment and the potential for travel and work placements during the course. There is a range of subjects:

- > Academic or more vocational, practically-based programmes
- > Traditional subjects like history, geography, languages, mathematics
- > More modern subjects like business, media studies, computing, psychology, sociology
- > Very modern subjects like mechatronics and robotics
- > Highly specialised subjects like speech therapy and journalism.

There are also professional degrees, which meet the requirements of professional organisations and allow you to enter your chosen profession after you graduate (e.g. medicine, dentistry, nursing, engineering, accountancy).

WHAT'S YOUR  
PASSION ?


Choose a subject you are passionate about and have a genuine enthusiasm for – you will be studying it in great detail over the coming years. Remember that admissions departments will look at your personal statement for evidence of your interest in the subject, particularly if you are applying to a competitive course.

HAVE YOU ALREADY  
DECIDED ON YOUR  
CAREER ?

Don't worry if you do not know what you'd like to do after university; many professions do not require a degree in a specific subject. However, if you have researched your options and decided on a career, it would be wise to choose a course related to that area of work. This applies in particular to careers in Medicine, Dentistry, Engineering or Architecture amongst others, as you will need to take a particular course at university.

WHAT TYPE OF  
DEGREE DO YOU  
WANT TO STUDY  
FOR ?

The most common undergraduate degrees in the UK are Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Law (LLB), and Bachelor of Engineering (BEng). In Scotland most undergraduate degrees are Masters degrees. These degrees either focus on one subject area (single honours), or two subject areas (joint honours). You can also start a Master's degree at undergraduate level, for example the Master of Engineering, which takes four years. These are often referred to as 'integrated undergraduate master's degrees.' The course length will vary depending on the type of degree programme you choose; this information will be available on the course profile page on the university website.



DO YOU WANT  
TO WORK IN  
INDUSTRY OR  
STUDY ABROAD  
AS PART OF  
YOUR DEGREE ?

Many courses include a year out from your university during the third year, of four-year programmes. These degrees are known as 'sandwich courses' and allow you to gain valuable experience away from your studies before returning to complete your final year.

These are some of the questions you should be asking yourself when choosing the course that will suit you best. If you need more help, you may find the following websites helpful:

**www.bestcourse4me.com** – an independent site that helps you link together what you're currently studying, what you'd like to study at university and the type of career this could lead to.

**www.ukcoursefinder.com** – a questionnaire that will help you decide the subject most suited to your interests and links to the degrees that match what you are looking for.

**university.which.co.uk** – a complete guide to university education, covering courses, subjects and universities.

WHAT TYPE OF  
ASSESSMENT  
SUITS YOU ?

You may want to consider how you will be assessed throughout your time at university. If you struggle with the pressure of examinations, you could choose a course where assignments and other achievements count towards your final degree. There are many different types of activities that are used as assessments and the subject matter will have a big influence on the type of assessment used. Assessments can take the form of traditional pen and paper examinations, research projects, presentations and performances to name a few. Once again, this information will be available on the course profile page on the university website.

WHAT PEARSON  
EDEXCEL A  
LEVEL OR BTEC  
RESULTS DID YOU  
ACHIEVE ?

Each course has its own entry requirements and you should be realistic about where you apply, as you can only submit a limited number of applications! Look at your mock, previous qualification grades (GCSEs, AS Levels, BTEC Firsts etc) and speak to your teachers and careers advisers to help you decide which courses have entry requirements at the right level for you.

Universities will usually state their entry requirements by listing the specific grades required for a course or by using the UCAS Tariff.

## WHAT IS UCAS ?

UCAS is the application service for UK universities and colleges, used by almost all students applying to UK universities. The UCAS Tariff allocates points to UK qualifications. The points for GCE A Levels and BTEC Nationals are shown below.



TIP: You can apply to five courses through UCAS, which means you don't have to submit separate applications to each university you are applying to. A common strategy is to choose two courses with entry requirements slightly above the results you are expecting, two courses with requirements that match your ability and one course slightly below your capability as a back-up. If you are applying to Oxbridge, you can usually only apply for one course at either university.

### UCAS TARIFF POINTS FOR PEARSON GCE A AND AS LEVELS

The UCAS Tariff points awarded to GCE A Levels are shown below.

UCAS points (2016 entry)		
AS Level points	Grade	A Level points
	A*	140
60	A	120
50	B	100
40	C	80
30	D	60
20	E	40

For example, if the entry requirements for a certain undergraduate programme are 3 grade Bs at A Level, a university may describe this as 300 UCAS points. In addition to expressing their requirements as UCAS points, they may have additional requirements such as "including grade A in Mathematics" or something similar.

From 2017, the UCAS Tariff will be changing and GCE A Levels will carry the following points. This does not affect the value of your A Levels, however AS Levels will be considered to be worth approximately 40% of an A Level, rather than the current 50%.

UCAS points (2017 entry onwards)		
AS Level points	Grade	A Level points
	A*	56
20	A	48
16	B	40
12	C	32
10	D	24
6	E	16

As Edexcel International Advanced Levels from Pearson are not regulated by Ofqual, they do not carry UCAS points. However, there is no need to worry, as you can still apply with International Advanced Levels through UCAS. Every UK University that accepts International Advanced Levels has confirmed they treat them the same as GCE A Levels.

### UCAS TARIFF POINTS FOR PEARSON BTEC NATIONALS

The UCAS points allocated to Pearson's BTEC National qualifications are shown, both for 2016 and 2017 onwards. Pearson's BTEC Nationals come in a number of sizes. To find out how many UCAS points your BTEC carries, you must know what size it is. If you are unsure, speak to your course tutor who will know.

Depending on the course you are applying to, a university may have specific requirements for BTEC students. For example, if their entry requirement for a Business Studies course is 280 UCAS points, the university may add that BTEC applications will only be accepted if the learner has studied Business or Management.

BTEC Size	Grade	UCAS points (2016)	UCAS points (2017 onwards)
Pearson BTEC Extended Diploma (QCF)	D*D*D*	420	168
	D*D*D	400	160
	D*DD	380	152
	DDD	360	144
	DDM	320	128
	DMM	280	112
	MMM	240	96
	MMP	200	80
	MPP	160	64
Pearson BTEC Diploma (QCF)	PPP	120	48
	D*D*	280	112
	D*D	260	104
	DD	240	96
	DM	200	80
	MM	160	64
	MP	120	48
Pearson BTEC 90-Credit Diploma (QCF)	PP	80	32
	D*D*	210	84
	D*D	200	78
	DD	180	72
	DM	160	60
	MM	120	48
	MP	100	36
Pearson BTEC Subsidiary Diploma (QCF)	PP	60	24
	D*	140	56
	D	120	48
	M	80	32
Pearson BTEC Certificate (QCF)	P	40	16
	D*	70	28
	D	60	24
	M	40	16
	P	20	8



## HIGHLIGHTS



When choosing your degree, carefully consider what you would like your future career to be. If you plan to work in areas such as Medicine, Dentistry or Architecture, it is vital you look at the qualification requirements for those professions.



In addition to the subject, think about other issues such as how well you cope with exam pressure and whether you feel a sandwich course would suit you.



Make the most of the online portals and websites that help you decide which subject is best for you.

Use Unistats to find out what previous students thought about a course, the likely costs and the kind of jobs or further study they went on to do  
<http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/find-out-more/about-unistats/>

There are many financial support options for international students who wish to study in the UK. Find out more here:  
<http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/scholarships-financial-support/>



# WHERE TO STUDY

Once you've decided what you'd like to study, you need to think about where you'd like to study. Ranking and reputation are important, but so are the geography and setting of universities.

When choosing a university, consider the following:

- > Does the university offer the subject or course you want?
- > Is it located in the kind of place you like to live – in a city, town, countryside or by the sea; on a campus or spread across different parts of a city?
- > Is the prestige or ranking of a university important to you? keeping in mind that some universities have a world-class reputation for specific subjects, but might not have a high overall ranking.
- > Where is your course taught, as many UK universities have multiple campuses?
- > Is the size of the university important to you?
- > Do you meet the overall entry requirements?
- > Do you want a “traditional” academic experience or would you like a more practical/applied learning experience?
- > Can you afford the university fees and the cost of living?

SUBJECT OR COURSE YOU WANT?

TRADITIONAL” ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

WHERE IS YOUR COURSE TAUGHT

PRESTIGE OR RANKING OF A UNIVERSITY

LOCATED IN THE KIND OF PLACE YOU LIKE

MEET THE OVERALL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

PRACTICAL/APPLIED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

SIZE OF THE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY FEES

COST OF LIVING



## LIFESTYLE

The way of life can vary greatly in the different parts of the UK. You will notice this most when you compare London to the rest of the country, where the pace of life can be very different. While London has the highest number of residents from all over the world and is very culturally diverse, other cities and towns around the country may be more traditionally British in character, but with a lot of local variations.

## COST OF LIVING

Your budget may also have an impact on where you decide to study. London is the most expensive city in the UK, followed by cities such as Oxford, Cambridge or Edinburgh. Accommodation and everyday costs in cities such as these are notably higher than other cities such as Hull, Swansea or Bradford, which are some of the cheaper places to live. Many universities provide a cost of living calculator, such as this one from The University of Kent - [www.kent.ac.uk/finance-student/livingcosts.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/finance-student/livingcosts.html)

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

While all UK universities welcome students from all over the world, some have a stronger reputation for their international community and you may feel more comfortable studying alongside students from the same part of the world as you. For guidance on which universities have the highest international student population, take a look here - [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/international-students-the-facts/by-university](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/international/international-students-the-facts/by-university)

## CAMPUS OR CITY ?



## HIGHLIGHTS



Choosing a university that suits you and your lifestyle is just as important as selecting the right subject.



Take into consideration the differences between universities based on a campus and those that are spread out over an urban area, and the location within the UK as the cost of living can vary considerably.



If you'd like to be surrounded by students from a similar culture, choose a university with a high large international student population.

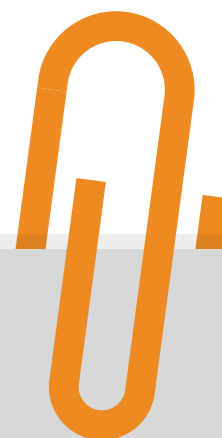
Find out more about different parts of the UK

[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)

[www.educationuk.org/global/sub/international-students-guide-to-the-uk](http://www.educationuk.org/global/sub/international-students-guide-to-the-uk)

Read about other students' experiences in different UK universities:

[www.educationuk.org/global/sub/student-experiences](http://www.educationuk.org/global/sub/student-experiences)



# WRITING YOUR APPLICATION

When you are ready to start writing your application, you will almost certainly use the UK's university application service, UCAS. Although some universities accept applications directly, most applications are made via UCAS. Get in touch with your chosen university (beforehand if you wish) to apply directly.

We'll explain some of the key points of the UCAS process here. Their website – [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) – provides full support and guidance and is a resource you should make full use of before, during and after making your application.



**Did you know UCAS processed almost three million applications from 700,000 students in 2014?**

## WHEN SHOULD I APPLY ?

The key deadlines to be aware of are:



15th October

DEADLINE

for submitting applications to Oxford and Cambridge universities, and medicine, veterinary medicine/ science and dentistry courses beginning the following year.



15th January

DEADLINE

for submitting applications for the majority of courses beginning in September of that year.



24th March

DEADLINE

for submitting applications for some art and design courses beginning in September of that year.

Should you miss any of the above deadlines, it is still worth contacting your chosen universities to ask whether you can submit an application. Universities may show a little flexibility with you as an international student and may allow you to send in a late application.



**HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO APPLY THROUGH UCAS?**

The charge for submissions is £12 (\$18 approx) for a single choice or £23 (\$35 approx\*) for multiple programmes and for any applications after 30th June.

\*Data correct on the 17/02/16



**Did you know that a lot of universities also take direct applications from international students (non-EU and EU)?** Check on the university's website to see if this is possible, as applying directly might be a better (and cheaper) option for you.

## WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO PROVIDE AS PART OF MY APPLICATION ?

The UCAS application has several sections and you need to provide information such as:

- > A reference – you'll need to ask someone who knows you well to write a reference for you. Ideally it will be someone who knows you academically, so if you are still in school or college, ask one of your teachers. You should not ask members of your family or close friends to write your reference. Remember that, as with the rest of your application, your reference must be written in English.

## WHAT TYPES OF OFFERS DO UNIVERSITIES MAKE ?

When you submit your application, you may not have finished studying for your Pearson Edexcel A Level or BTEC qualifications and your final results will not be available. For this reason, there are three types of offers universities can make:

- > Unconditional – the university has decided it would like to offer you a place regardless of your results.
- > Conditional – the university has decided it would like to offer you a place, if you achieve certain results. Examples of conditional offers would be "A Level grades ABB, including grade A Mathematics" or "BTEC National Extended Diploma in Art & Design, grade MMM."
- > Unsuccessful/withdrawn – the university has decided you are unlikely to meet the course requirements or, in the case of withdrawn, you didn't provide sufficient information when asked (e.g. you didn't respond to emails or letters).

## HOW DO I RESPOND TO OFFERS BEFORE MY RESULTS ?

As with the types of offer, there are three ways of responding before you receive your results. They are:

- > Firm acceptance – this indicates that this is your first choice university and course. If your offer is unconditional, you are committing to taking a place on that course. If your offer is conditional and you accept it, you are saying that you will study at that university, should you meet the conditions.
- > Insurance acceptance – in addition to firmly accepting a course, you can also accept a second course as insurance. This should be a course with lower entry requirements, as you will only be attending this university if you don't meet the requirements of your first choice institution.
- > Decline – you can only make one firm acceptance and one insurance acceptance from the universities you applied to. You must decline any other offers you get.

## YOUR OFFERS

Your results for Edexcel A Levels, International Advanced Levels, or BTEC qualifications from Pearson are passed to UCAS on your behalf.

## WHAT DO I DO ONCE I HAVE MY RESULTS ?

On results day, log into 'Track' on the UCAS website to see the status of your applications. There are a number of possible statuses you may see, particularly if your grades do not match the entry requirements for your desired course. All of the potential statuses are explained, along with guidance on what you need to do next, on the UCAS website - <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/results/what-your-results-mean>.

If you do not get the results you hoped for or are not accepted onto the courses for which you've applied, you can go through a process called "Clearing." Clearing (on the UCAS website) will allow you to see which courses are yet to fill up and let you contact those universities to see whether they will accept you with your results. You can also go through Clearing if you change your course and/or university choice even if you have achieved your predicted grades.

If you achieved better results than you expected and want to change your degree programme and/or University choice, you can use a process called "Adjustment." Adjustment gives you five days to change your mind, provided you achieved better results than stated in your original firm offer. Throughout Adjustment you still keep your place on the course you gained on results day.



For extra support, why not watch our webinar on writing personal statements from James O'Leary, available [HERE](http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns/progression-plus.html):  
<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns/progression-plus.html>

## VISA TIMELINE

### TAKE YOUR FINAL A LEVEL EXAMS



**May to June** - most students will finish their A Level studies with the May and June examinations, however some of you may finish in January or November, depending on where you are in the world

### RECEIVE YOUR CAS NUMBER



**Mid August** - you will receive your CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) number when your university offer becomes unconditional, which is usually on results day

### START AT UNIVERSITY



**Late September** - most universities begin the first semester in late September, however the actual dates vary by university. Your university life will typically begin with 'Freshers Week' to help you settle in.

### SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION



**Mid October** - deadline for Oxbridge, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

**Mid January** - deadline for the majority of courses

**Mid March** - deadline for some Art and Design courses

### RECEIVE YOUR RESULTS



**Mid August** - if you take your exams in May and June, you will receive your results in August, however if you take your exams in January, you will receive your results in March

### APPLY FOR A VISA



**Mid August** - you will need to apply for your visa within three months of your course start date. Therefore, if you receive your CAS number in mid August, you will need to apply for a visa immediately.

## HIGHLIGHTS

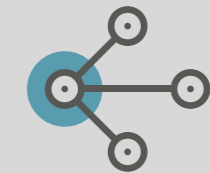
You must follow the instructions for writing your applications exactly.



There are three key application deadlines – 15th October, 15th January and 24th March.



There are three types of offer you can receive – unconditional, conditional and unsuccessful/withdrawn.



You can respond to offers in three ways – firm acceptance, insurance acceptance and decline.

More advice on personal statements

<http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/universities/applying-to-university-and-ucas-deadlines/personal-statements-%E2%80%93-an-insider's-view/writing-the-perfect-personal-statement/>

<https://www.studential.com/applying/personal-statement-writing/FAQs>

# PREPARING TO COME TO THE UK

Once you have decided you want to study in the UK and have been accepted onto a degree programme, you will face the exciting but possibly daunting experience of moving to a new country.



## VISAS \*

If you are not an EU citizen, the first thing you will need to do is get a visa. As a student, you will most likely be applying for a Tier 4 student visa. Here are a few key points about applying for a student visa:

- > You can apply for a student visa as soon as you have your Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) number. You get this with an unconditional offer from a university.
- > You can only apply for a visa a maximum of 3 months before your course starts.
- > An application costs £322.
- > Applications typically take up to three weeks to be processed.

\* All information correct at the time of publication

Please remember that you need to have proof of funding available when you submit your visa application. If you need any help with your application, most universities have an International Office to assist you.

For full guidance on visas, please refer to the UK immigration page here: [www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas](http://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas).

## ACCOMMODATION

Finding somewhere to live should be easy to arrange, as UK universities provide a lot of support with accommodation. There are typically two types of accommodation available: halls of residence (university owned housing) and private property, where rent is paid to a landlord. Some of these questions will help you to choose a place to live that suits your personal preferences:

- > What kind of neighbourhood do I want to live in? Quiet? Lively? A student area?
- > How close do I want to be to the university? To places of employment? To shops, sports facilities, or nightlife?
- > How much can I afford to spend on accommodation?
- > Which amenities am I happy to share with other people? Bathroom? Kitchen?

Once again, the International Office at your chosen university will be able to advise and assist with finding suitable accommodation for you.



## HEALTHCARE

The National Health Service (NHS) is a publicly funded health care system that covers the UK. The NHS provides free treatment to everyone for some matters (e.g. accident and emergency services). If you need a Tier 4 visa you have to pay an 'Immigrant Health Surcharge' when you pay for your visa. This gives you the same access to the NHS as UK residents. Some countries have reciprocal arrangements with the UK so you may be entitled to free medical treatment. Check what you are entitled to, and take out medical insurance for unforeseen illnesses if you need to. If you have a pre-existing condition, make sure you bring your medication with you from home.

In the UK there are two types of organisations that provide healthcare: GP (general practitioner) surgeries and hospitals. GP surgeries are based in the local community and may even be on the university campus. You should visit your GP surgery with any non-urgent medical problems where a doctor should be able to provide you with an initial diagnosis and, where necessary, refer you to the local hospital. It is a good idea to register at a GP surgery before you get ill.

Hospitals treat more serious ailments and some also have Accident & Emergency (A&E) departments. If you ever have an illness or injury that requires immediate attention you should go to your local A&E and they will be able to provide you with the treatment you need.

You will have to pay for medicine or other health services such as checkups or treatments from dentists (for your teeth) or opticians (for your eyes).

## UK WAY OF LIFE

You may experience a bit of a culture shock and find it difficult to adjust when you first arrive in the UK. Quite often British people are portrayed in popular media as speaking like the Queen and living in large houses in the countryside. In reality the majority live in urban areas and have a variety of accents, some of which can be quite hard to understand!

Do try to adjust to the British culture as much as you feel comfortable, as you will be staying in the UK for a significant period of time and you'll find your stay far more enjoyable if you feel at home. The weather may come as a bit of a shock if you are arriving from a hot climate. British weather is typically mild, however there are occasional periods of very hot summer weather and icy cold winter weather. You will need warm clothes for the winter but don't worry if you do not have these, you can buy clothes at affordable prices in the UK.

## EMPLOYMENT

You may be allowed to work in the UK while studying. Check what your passport sticker (entry clearance or residence permit) or biometric residence permit (BRP) says. You should also have received detailed information in a letter when you received your entry clearance or BRP. You can work in the UK if your passport sticker or identity card says one of the following, or something similar:

- > Work (and any changes) must be authorised
- > Able to work as authorised by the Secretary of State
- > Work as in Tier 4 Rules
- > Restricted Work. P/T term time. F/T vacations
- > Restricted work term time
- > Work limited to max 20 hrs per week during term-time
- > Work limited to max 10 hrs per week during term-time.

Your passport sticker or identity card might say something a bit different from these examples. You are not allowed to work if they say:

- > No work, or
- > Work prohibited.

The maximum hours you can work during term-time are normally printed on your visa sticker or Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), and will depend mainly on when you made your most recent immigration application. If your visa sticker or BRP is not clear, select the date you applied from the UK Council for International Student Affairs website (<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Working-during-your-studies/How-many-hours-a-week-can-I-work/>).

For international students, working in the UK is highly regulated. This means there are restrictions on the number of hours you can work, the type of work you are allowed to do and the employers you are able to work for. The regulations ensure you have clearly defined rights; that you are protected under UK law, that your pay meets the minimum wage (<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>), you work in a safe work environment and are protected from abuse.

For more information have a look at the UK Council for International Student Affairs web pages: <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Working-during-your-studies/>.

Part-time jobs that fit in with your visa conditions and leave you plenty of time to study should be available in or near your university. You can find out about employment opportunities on campus either through an intranet or perhaps through the Students' Union. If you'd prefer to work away from the university, ask in local shops, supermarkets or restaurants, or take a look at online job boards, where you may be able to find opportunities to suit you.



Want to find out more about British culture? Visit [www.foreignstudents.com/guide-to-britain/british-culture](http://www.foreignstudents.com/guide-to-britain/british-culture).

## ARRIVING IN THE UK

Typically your first week at university will be known as “Fresher’s Week”. This week is for all first year students, both from the UK and abroad, to help them settle in and meet new people. The many activities taking place include opportunities to join societies and get to know other students at social events in the evening. Classes do not usually take place during this week.

Universities recognise that international students require a little more support when arriving in the UK; you may find that your university has organised a formal induction for you. For example, the university may set up meetings for you with the local police and doctor’s (GP) surgery to complete the necessary registrations.

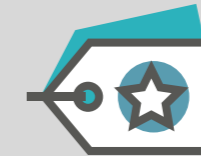
## KEEPING IN CONTACT WITH HOME

Moving to the UK is likely to mean you are leaving behind friends and family with whom you want to stay in regular contact. The cheapest way to speak with your nearest and dearest is to use online video calls, providing you both have access to the necessary. If you need to keep in touch by phone, there are a number of international call providers you can use to make cheap calls home.

## HIGHLIGHTS



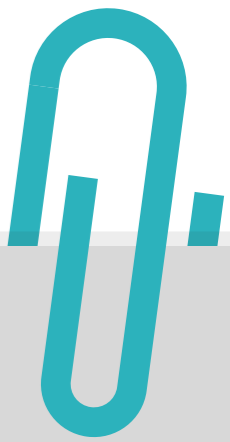
If you are coming to study in the UK and are not an EU citizen, you will need to obtain a visa. Typically this will be a student visa, and you will need to wait until you have a CAS number before you apply.



There is a range of accommodation available to students in the UK. Make sure you choose the option that suits your lifestyle best.



Many healthcare services are provided free of charge, however you may need to take out health insurance.



What else should I bring with me other than clothes? Take a look at the checklist on The Student Room website:  
[www.thestudentroom.co.uk](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk)



What’s the cheapest way to call home? Depending on where home is, the cheapest provider will change. To find out the cheapest provider for you, take a look here: **callchecker.moneysavingexpert.com.**

### Quick links

[www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Health-and-healthcare/Who-is-entitled-to-free-hospital-treatment-before-6-April-2015/](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Health-and-healthcare/Who-is-entitled-to-free-hospital-treatment-before-6-April-2015/)

[www.strath.ac.uk/sees/infoint/immigrationhealthsurcharge/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/sees/infoint/immigrationhealthsurcharge/)

To read more about the immigration health surcharge and how it will affect you visit the Home Office website [www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-health-surcharge-information-for-migrants](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-health-surcharge-information-for-migrants)

### Health Service

[www2.le.ac.uk/offices/healthy-living-for-students/new-students/international-students](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/healthy-living-for-students/new-students/international-students)

### Other support

National Union of Students  
[www.nus.org.uk/en/students-unions/](http://www.nus.org.uk/en/students-unions/)

What to wear

[www.educationuk.org/global/articles/clothing-what-to-wear-as-a-uk-student](http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/clothing-what-to-wear-as-a-uk-student)

### Jobs

Getting a national insurance number  
[www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number](http://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number)

[www.foreignstudents.com/jobs](http://www.foreignstudents.com/jobs)



# COMPLETING YOUR STUDIES

What to do after graduation is probably the last thing on your mind, at the start of your studies. However, it is a good idea to think about what you'd like to do when you graduate. If you leave it until the end, it is possible that it will be harder to follow the path you have chosen.



WHAT COULD I DO AFTER  
COMPLETING MY DEGREE ?

## CONTINUE STUDYING

You may decide during your undergraduate education that you'd like to continue studying for a higher degree. This may be in the form of a Master's degree, a doctorate, a professional qualification or even a second undergraduate degree. UCAS have an area on their website where you can find out more about postgraduate study ([www.ucas.com/ucas/postgraduate](http://www.ucas.com/ucas/postgraduate))

## PROGRESS TO EMPLOYMENT IN THE UK

Many corporations in the UK, and some small and medium-sized enterprises, have programmes where recent graduates can experience various parts of the organisation over an extended period of time, typically one to two years. There are also many graduate-level jobs available throughout the UK, should you feel a graduate programme is not the route you wish to take. For information on the best graduate employers in the UK, visit [www.top100graduateemployers.com](http://www.top100graduateemployers.com)

## RETURN TO YOUR HOME COUNTRY

You may well wish to return home or live in a new country after finishing your degree. If you do, be sure to join your university's alumni network to stay in touch with the people you met during your time at university. Not only will you stay in contact with the friends you made, you will have access to a large network of people who may be able to help you as your career progresses.

## VISAS

Many of you will be studying in the UK on a Tier 4 student visa and, if you are planning to extend your stay in the country, you should take a look at the UK Government website to understand the rules about extensions.



How do I find out more about extending my visa? Visit [www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/extend-your-visa](http://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/extend-your-visa). Make sure you consider your options and apply for an extension well before your graduation.



## HIGHLIGHTS



Student visas will expire soon after you complete your studies so it is vital to consider your next step as early as possible and apply for an extension if you plan to stay in the UK.



Depending on your visa status, there are three main options open to you upon completion of your degree: to continue studying, progress into employment or return home.

### Finding a job

[nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/Pages/default.aspx](https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/Pages/default.aspx)

### Graduate schemes

[www.graduate-jobs.com/](https://www.graduate-jobs.com/)

### Getting ready to go

[www.educationuk.org/global/articles/getting-ready-to-depart](https://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/getting-ready-to-depart)

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