



UK GRADUATE
power through education

International Student Handbook & Pre-Arrival Guide 2023–2024

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International Student Advice

All information provided in this handbook is general and may be subject to change, please see the [UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\)](#) website for the most up to date information . The college is not responsible for any UKVI policy changes nor changes to the [UK Government travel advice](#)

Pre-arrival

Visa/entry clearance

Immigration rules and the requirements for each visa category change frequently and often with little notice. In general, most international students will need to apply for a student visa to study in the UK but you can check the [UK Visas and Immigration](#) website for further information on the other types of visa categories that may apply to you.

If you are an EU, non-EU EEA national, Swiss citizen or an eligible family member with settled or pre-settled status, you will not need a student visa to study.

If you require a student visa, you will need a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) issued by the college before making your student visa application.

You will receive regular emails, invitations to webinars and support with the college's Pre-CAS assessments and student visa application process. Up to date information can be found in the [Student visa](#) pages,

When your student visa application is granted you will receive a 90-day entry visa in your passport which allows entry to the UK and a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card collection letter. The BRP card is your visa which covers the full duration of your studies and you will collect this from designated post office in the UK. Please see 'Collecting your Biometric Residence Permit Card' section for further details.

You can email the International Student Advice team (admin@ukgraduate.org.uk) for further support.

Kickstarter Programme:

The UK Graduate careers team in partnership with employers host a week-long Kickstarter programme for eligible international students a few weeks prior to the start of their course. This is an opportunity for offer holders that have paid a tuition fee deposit to join in on our innovative programme and learn about the academic structure and college life before arriving on campus.

We expect the next Kickstarter programme to take place the week commencing 26th June 2023. You will receive an email closer to the time with a schedule and links to sign-up.

This programme covers the following:

- How to set-up your UK Graduate Account;
- Navigating Teams to communicate with tutors and learn remotely;
- Academic Referencing and Paraphrasing;
- Presentation Skills;
- Culture Shock and Adjusting to life in the UK and
- Structuring and Planning Academic Reports.
- Plus, many more sessions

Pre-Departure Event:

The Pre-Departure event will take place virtually on Wednesday, 8th July 2023. This exciting event will give you the opportunity to hear directly from your school as to how to prepare for your studies ahead and everything you need to know before you set foot on campus and start your UK Graduate student journey.

This event will host the following:

- School Specific Sessions
- Student Experience Sessions
- Arriving on Campus Sessions
- Mental Wealth Sessions
- A virtual expo

We look forward to having you join us for this exciting event.

International Orientation Programme

You will be contacted separately regarding our exciting International Orientation Programme. This is a range of events that will give you the chance to see the campus, meet other students and learn about what lies ahead at College of East London. We will hopefully show you how to get the most out of your studies and your social life whilst you are here with us.

Arrival

Preparing to travel to the UK

The requirements you need to follow to travel to the UK depend on which country you are coming from and where you have visited or passed through in the 10 days before arrival.

Ensure you follow the latest advice and guidance on [Entering the UK](#)

Booking Flights

We recommend you do not book flights to the UK until you have received your visa. You will need to travel to the UK within the validity of your 90-day entry visa. Please contact the International Student Advice team (admin@ukgraduate.org.uk) if you are unable to for further advice.

What to bring in your main luggage

Try to bring what you need rather than everything you want. The climate in the UK is temperate which means it does not get very cold for long in the winter or very hot for long in the summer. Although on occasion we do get snow, and it can rain frequently, so ensure you bring appropriate clothing.

What to bring in your hand luggage

Your hand luggage should contain items that you can use if your main luggage is delayed. Things to consider: Travel documents, basic toiletries, a spare change of clothing, your mobile phone and charger, first aid kit (and any prescribed medication) any valuable items, camera.

Please check with your airline how many and what size bags you can take on the plane with you. Some airlines might also have different restrictions. Check with your airline before you travel if you're not sure about what you can take as hand luggage.

Please be aware of the restrictions on electronic devices and electrical items, food, animals or plants, medicines, chemicals, toxic substances, sports equipment, tools, knives, weapons, explosives etc.

If you do take liquids in your hand luggage:

- containers must hold no more than 100ml
- containers must be in a single, transparent, resealable plastic bag, which holds no more than a litre and measures approximately 20cm x 20cm
- contents must fit comfortably inside the bag so it can be sealed

- the bag must not be knotted or tied at the top
- you're limited to 1 plastic bag per person
- you must show the bag at the airport security point

If you are bringing medicine containing a controlled drug into the UK, you will need to prove your medicine is prescribed to you if:

- it contains a 'controlled drug'
- you have it on you when you're entering the UK

This would require supporting documentation from a relevant medical professional (e.g. a letter from your doctor or a copy of your prescription).

If you are entering the UK on a student visa, you should carry the below documents in your hand luggage

Document	Tick
Passport	
Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card collection letter	
Copy of your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)	
UKVI TB test certificate (if you were required to have one as part of your student visa application)	
Copy of qualifications listed on your CAS	
ATAS certificate (if this was stated on your CAS)	
Finances (copy of your bank statement / loan letter)	
Proof of sponsorship if you are a sponsored student	
Proof of your parents' finances, a signed letter of support and your original birth certificate (if your parents are supporting you)	
Evidence of where you are planning on staying	

Top Tips for First Time Student Arrivals

As part of your preparations for studying in the UK, Border Force want to make sure you have everything you need to get through the UK border as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Follow these tips for a smooth journey through the UK border:

1. Have your passport ready.
2. Ensure you complete a landing card (if a non EEA National).
3. Have your Acceptance letter from The College ready.
4. Keep any medical documentation, recent bank statement and details of where you are staying in your hand luggage.
5. Do not bring in any meat or dairy products from outside the UK.
6. There are also restrictions on other food products such as fish, eggs and honey, as well as some fruit, vegetables and plants (e.g. bulbs, seeds, cut flowers and tree bark).
7. There are also restrictions on the amount of tobacco, alcohol and gifts you can bring into the UK. If you exceed your duty-free allowance and do not declare them, all of your items could be taken away from you.
8. Never bring in counterfeit goods, illegal drugs, offensive weapons or indecent or obscene material. Some items are restricted and will require a licence or permit.
9. You must declare any sums of cash of £10,000 or more (or the equivalent in another currency) if you are travelling from a country outside the European Union.
10. Never give false or misleading information (including forged or counterfeit documents).

Border control

When you enter the UK, you will need to pass through immigration control. You should ensure the border officer stamps your passport indicating the date you enter the UK. You will need this stamp to complete your Right to Study check and collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP card).

Should you have any significant difficulties at this stage, you can call the International Student Advice and Compliance team on 0203 609 0260. The phone lines will be open from 9am-5pm Monday – Friday.

Entering the UK via the eGates

If you are a national from an EU country, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland or the USA you may be able to enter the UK via the [eGates](#). This means you do not need to go through border control.

Top Tip

If entering the UK via the E-Gates, you must keep a copy of your **boarding pass** as you will need this to enrol and collect your BRP card as proof of the date you entered the UK.

Upon arrival to the UK

Quarantine

You may be required to quarantine upon arrival in the UK. The exact details of what period of quarantine will apply to you can be found on the [government website](#) and we recommend you familiarise yourselves with these before travelling.

***Subject to the country of origin not being on the government's red list at the time of your arrival**

Travelling to your accommodation.

London has a very good range of transport links via trains, underground and busses. However, if you are travelling alone with a considerable amount of luggage, it would be worth considering alternative options.

[Heathrow Express](#), will take you from Heathrow into central London (Paddington) and is promoted as the quickest, but you will have to consider your onward journey from Paddington so for that reason it may not be the most convenient.

Underground (The Tube) Single tickets. The standard single underground ticket from Heathrow airport to central London (zone 1) is £6.00 for adults.

London taxis are available outside each terminal. The cost to central London is £45–£70, more to East London and the journey time is approximately one hour. (An hour and a half to East London)

Alternatively, [book a minicab or chauffeur](#) in advance.

[Uber](#) is also available but can be expensive if there are traffic delays.

Collecting your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) card

Your BRP card is your visa which will cover the full duration of your course.

You are required to collect your BRP card from the post office addressed on your BRP collection letter upon arrival to the UK and only after any period of mandatory quarantine. **You must complete your quarantine first.**

Documents to bring with you when collecting your BRP card

1. BRP collection letter
2. Passport (90-day visa) with the stamp from the border officer.
3. Entered via the E-Gates?
 - a. A copy of your boarding pass to show when you entered the UK.

Under 18 years old?

If you are under 18 years old, you will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult to collect your BRP card. To do this you must nominate someone to collect your BRP card by visiting the [GOV.UK Biometric residence permits \(BRPs\)](https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits-brps) page.

Applied for your student visa inside the UK?

Your BRP card will be posted to your address in the UK upon successful outcome of your visa application.

EU/ EEA national

If you are an EU/EEA national and have applied for a student visa using the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' App you will receive an electronic visa. You will not receive a BRP card. Please see how to [prove your Immigration status for](#) more information.

BRP card safety

Please keep your BRP safe. If you lose your BRP card it can take up to 8 weeks to replace.

You will only need your BRP card for the following:

- Completing enrolment.
- Registering with a doctor (General Practitioner, GP). Registering with the Police (if applicable).
- Opening a bank account.
- Proof of rent or tenancy AND
- Proof of work (if you are wanting to get a part time job)

You are not required to carry your BRP card with you when leaving your house, so keep it safe with your passport.

If you notice an error on your BRP card

If you notice an error on your BRP please contact the International Student Advice team at admin@ukgraduate.org.uk who can help you get it corrected.

Police Registration

You may need to [register with the Police](#) upon your arrival to the UK and after any period of mandatory quarantine depending on your nationality and visa conditions. You can find more information on the process of registering with the police by visiting the [Overseas Visitors' Register Office \(OVRO\)](#) website

Student visa responsibilities – Rights & Obligations under Tier 4

If you are on student visa you have certain responsibilities and you will be reminded of these throughout your studies and during your international welcome programme.

There are certain things that your Tier 4/Student visa will prohibit you from doing.

You must not:

Claim public funds

Read more about public funds on the [UK Government website](#)

Please note: the Energy Bills Support Scheme discount is NOT a public fund.

Work as a self-employed person

Engage in business activity

Work as an entertainer, sportsperson or coach

Study your main programme with an institution that is not the sponsor of your visa

If you wish to study at another institution, you must apply for a visa for that institution before you can begin your programme

Stay in the UK past the end date of your visa, unless you have made a visa application to extend your stay in the UK

Responsibilities attached to a Tier 4/Student visa:

- Enrol online on your course before the enrolment deadline.
- Provide a copy of your passport and visa documents electronically to the college when requested.
- Attending all classes, lectures and seminars, or if you are a research student, engaging regularly with your supervisor. *If you cannot attend for any reason, you must inform your School or supervisor, and get permission for your absence*
- Ensure your contact details are always up to date with UK Graduate.
- Inform the International Student Advice team of any errors on your BRP card.
- Seeking immigration advice in a timely fashion - Inform the International Student Advice team if you change your course or your immigration status changes during your studies.
- Pay your tuition fees on time.
- Follow the work conditions.
- Do not access public funds.
- Ensuring that you leave the UK, or apply to extend your stay, before the expiry date of your visa

The College's Responsibilities

As your sponsor, the College has agreed to be responsible for you while your visa is valid. We have a number of legal obligations which must be fulfilled.

Recording duties

The College must keep a record of:

Your current address, email address and telephone number

Your current visa or Biometrics Residence Permit

Your attendance at classes/seminars/lectures/etc. or other engagement with your studies

Reporting duties

The College is required to inform the Home Office if you fail to enrol on time.

You are required to enrol at the College by the latest start date on your CAS. If you cannot arrive by that time, you must arrange a later start date with your School, and let us know so we can tell the Home Office.

If you cannot arrange a later start date, the College must tell the Home Office that you will not start your programme, and your Student visa will be cancelled. You must not attempt to travel to the UK using your Student visa.

If you defer your studies, the College will tell the Home Office and your visa will be cancelled. You will need to apply for a new Student visa to begin your studies at a later date.

Changes to your studies

You change your programme

You are normally allowed to change your programme without it affecting your visa, providing:

- You are changing to the same level, or a higher level of study at the same institution; AND
- Your programme is at degree level or above; AND
- You can complete your new programme within the validity of your current visa; AND
- Your new programme represents academic progression from your previous programme; AND
- You apply for a new Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate if required

If the new programme is shorter than the previous one, your visa will be curtailed to reflect the new end date. This will normally mean that your visa will expire four months after the new end date.

If your new programme is longer than the previous one, you will need to apply for extra time to complete your studies. You may not be able to make your application in the UK. For full information about this, see our information about academic progression and time limits.

Student visa: time limits and academic progression

You do not attend classes

If you fail to attend 10 consecutive required academic engagements (such as classes, tutorials, lectures, etc.) without seeking permission from your School or supervisor, the College is required to exclude you from your programme.

The College must inform the Home Office and your visa will be curtailed. The Home Office will write to you, normally by email, and tell you the new expiry date of your visa. This will normally be 60 days from the date of the email.

We cannot tell you exactly when the Home Office will write to you, but we advise you to make plans to leave the UK, or apply for alternative immigration permission, within 60 days of formally withdrawing or being excluded from your studies.

Your Tier 4/Student work permission is cancelled from the date you withdraw or are excluded from studies. You must not work once you have withdrawn or been excluded. Doing so would be a serious breach of UK immigration law.

You withdraw from your studies, or are excluded

The College must inform the Home Office and your Tier 4 visa will be curtailed. The Home Office will write to you, normally by email, and tell you the new expiry date of your visa. This will normally be 60 days from the date of the email.

We cannot tell you exactly when the Home Office will write to you, but we advise you to make plans to leave the UK, or apply for alternative immigration permission, within 60 days of formally withdrawing or being excluded from your studies.

Your Tier 4/Student work permission is cancelled from the date you withdraw or are excluded from studies. You must not work once you have withdrawn or been excluded. Doing so would be a serious breach of UK immigration law.

You defer your studies, or take an interruption

If you interrupt your studies for more than 60 days, the College cannot continue to sponsor your visa. This includes circumstances of serious illness or pregnancy.

Your visa will be curtailed and you will be given 60 days to leave the UK or apply for a different visa to stay. You will need to apply for a new Student visa to return to studies.

We strongly advise you to speak to a Student Immigration Adviser before you defer or interrupt your studies.

You change the location of your programme

If you take a leave of absence to study, or do a work placement, in another location, the College will inform the Home Office of your new location. Your Tier 4/Student visa will not normally be affected and will remain valid until its expiry date.

Right To study Check

The college has a statutory requirement to collect copies of your immigration documents to ensure you have the correct permission to study in the UK. You will be invited to upload evidence of your immigration permission on the Right to Study once you have enrolled.

The evidence you will be asked to provide will vary depending on your immigration status.

You will receive emails and further support to assist you with this process.

Please note: if you have made an in-time valid student visa application inside the UK you can enrol and study on your course whilst awaiting the outcome of the visa decision.

You are also allowed and expected to start your studies online in your home country remotely whilst waiting for your visa application to be approved and waiting to travel to the UK.

Life in the UK

Working in the UK

National Insurance number

Before working in the UK, you are required to obtain a [National Insurance Number](#). You will only be able to apply for a National Insurance Number once you have arrived in the UK.

Working restrictions

If you are on a student visa you are restricted to only working the hours stated on your Biometric Residence permit (BRP) card during term time. This will be either 10 or 20 hours per week depending on your course.

Term time is defined by the College's academic calendar and you can get a student status letter from the hub which you can show your employer before starting work.

If you are on a student visa you are not allowed to:

- Be self-employed or engage in business activity
- Take employment as an entertainer
 - Entertainer includes singers, comedians, dancers, actors and other performers.
 - There is an exception if you are undertaking a work placement on a degree level of above course in music or drama.
- Take employment as a professional sportsperson including a sports coach
- Fill a full-time permanent vacancy
- Be a Doctor or dentist in training

For more detailed guidance see page 93 onwards of [Student Route Caseworker Guidance](#)

Income Tax

You pay income tax on your earnings. However, if your total annual income from all sources (apart from student loans, scholarships and educational grants) is not more than £12,570 (this figure is for

the tax year 2022/2023), you should receive your wages without tax being deducted. Please see [Income Tax rates and Personal Allowances](#) for more information.

Opening a UK Bank account

We recommend you open a UK bank account once you arrive in the UK and after any period of mandatory quarantine. You will need to take evidence of who you are and where you live to open a UK bank account. You will need:

- A student status letter issued by the Hub
- Your passport and immigration documents

The college cannot provide you with any recommendations regarding a specific bank you should choose. You can however try using comparison websites to find a suitable bank

Registering with doctor

Some of you may have paid for the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as part of your visa application. This allows you to use most services on the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK for free. It is important that you register with a doctor (called a GP, for 'General Practitioner') in the UK upon your arrival after any period of mandatory quarantine.

Use the [NHS Find a GP](#) to search for a GP near your home address, then contact them and let them know you would like to register.

Prescriptions

If your doctor provides you with medication, they may write a prescription for you. You will need to take your prescription to a pharmacy and pay a standard charge.

Driving in the UK

In London most students use public transport (train, tube and buses) to travel. Before driving any vehicle in the UK, you should check all legal requirements that apply to the vehicle and the driver.

For more information please see [Driving in Great Britain on a non-GB licence](#)

[UKCISA](#) also has a very useful information on driving in the UK.

Drink driving is illegal in the UK, you should always wear a seatbelt where one is provided and observe speed limits which are in miles per hours (MPH).

Television Licence

The law requires you to be covered by a TV Licence to:

- watch or record programmes as they are being shown on TV, on any channel
- watch or stream programmes live on an online TV service (for instance ITV Hub, all 4, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Now TV, Sky Go, etc.)
- download or watch any BBC programmes on BBC iPlayer.

This applies to any device you use, including a TV, desktop computer, laptop, mobile phone, tablet, games console, digital box or DVD/VHS recorder.

How much does a Student TV Licence cost?

A [standard TV Licence](#) costs £159. There isn't a student discount. But if you do not need your licence for a full 12 months; you can apply for a refund for any completely unused quarters (three consecutive calendar months). If you buy a TV licence in October it allows enough time to qualify for a refund at the end of the academic year. For further information please call 0870 241 5973.

Do I need one if I live in College Accommodation

A college halls communal licence won't cover your room. If you have a television in your room, you will require a valid licence.

What if I live in a house or flat share?

If you have a separate tenancy agreement for your room, you will need your own TV Licence.

If you have a joint tenancy agreement for an entire house or flat, you and your flatmates will probably need one licence to cover the whole property.

You could be prosecuted if you have been watching or recording live TV programmes on any channel or device, or downloading or watching BBC programmes on BBC iPlayer, without being covered by a licence. The maximum penalty is a £1,000 fine plus any legal costs and/or compensation you may be ordered to pay.

Please note TV Licensing is a UK Government organisation and is not part of UK GRADUATE.

Emergency numbers

999 – The Main Emergency number. Emergency number for Police Ambulance Fire. You should always call 999 when it is an emergency, such as when a crime is in progress, someone suspected of a crime is nearby, when there is danger to life or when violence is being used or threatened. Calls are free, and 999 can be dialled from a locked mobile phone.

111 – the non-emergency medical number. Use this for illnesses and minor injuries where life is not threatened, but you would like some advice on what to do next.

101 – The non-emergency number for the police. Use 101 when you want to contact the police, but it's not an emergency – i.e. an immediate response is not necessary and/or will not be serve any purpose. A general rule is "if the crime is not currently in progress, use 101."

Silent Witness. If you witnessed a crime, incident or have information about a crime which occurred on campus you can report it anonymously. You can now report any such information in strict confidence; you do not have to give your name. Call **0203 609 0260** and leave a message.

London Airports

Gatwick Airport Enquiries General information

Telephone: +44 (0) 344 892 0322

Website: www.gatwickairport.com

Heathrow Airport Enquiries Telephone:

+44 (0)844 335 1801 Website:

www.heathrowairport.com

London City Airport

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7646 0000

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