

International Pre-Departure & Arrival Guide



Welcome

This Guide is designed to help you prepare for your time at the University of Aberdeen.

Remember to contact us if you have any questions about your application or arrival in Aberdeen. You can find contact details **here**, under the 'Support with Your Visa - Contact Us' tab.

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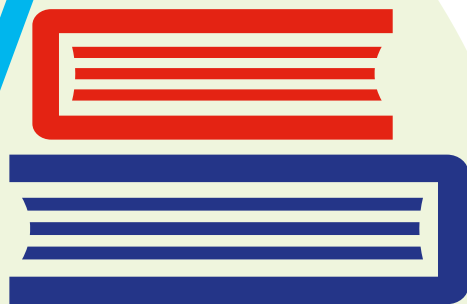
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Preparing for your departure

Your Visa

Most international students require a Student visa to study in the UK. You can find out more about whether or not you require a visa by visiting the UK Government [website](#).

If you are still unsure, or believe you do not require a visa to enter the UK, please **email the International Student Advisers** giving your applicant ID, outlining your circumstances and attaching a copy of your current passport and any UK visas.

Preparing for the Visa Application

It is important you allow enough time for your visa application to be processed before your programme start date. Visa applications can be submitted once you have received your CAS and you have prepared all supporting documents.

You should not submit the visa application until you have the required funds in place and all the required documents including a TB Test Certificate and ATAS clearance, if applicable. You can find a list of the required documents by visiting the UK Government [website](#).

Some students may be asked to attend a credibility interview as part of the visa application process. You can find out more information by clicking [here](#).

The following section highlights the most common visa requirements for most students. If you have any queries relating to visa requirements which are not listed here, please **email** the International Student Advisers.



Step 1: Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

Your CAS number is an electronic reference number that you will need before you can apply for a Student visa. It confirms to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) that you have met the University's entry conditions and that you hold an Unconditional Offer of Admission.

To receive your CAS letter, you must have:

- > Accepted your offer
- > Met all conditions attached to your offer

Before your CAS can be issued, we also need a copy of the passport you plan to use with your visa application and confirmation of how your studies will be funded. Your passport should be valid within 3 months of programme start date, however if you're going to renew your passport, you should wait until it has been issued before requesting your CAS.

Your CAS letter will confirm your tuition fees for the first 12 months of your studies and, if you have paid tuition fees in advance, these will be noted on the CAS letter too. If anything on your CAS is incorrect please email by clicking [here](#) for postgraduate applicants, or [here](#) for undergraduate applicants as soon as possible.

Step 2: Funding

Before submitting a visa application, you must be able to satisfy the UKVI financial requirements, which are as follows:

- > You must have sufficient funds to cover your tuition fees for the first 12 months of your studies and sufficient maintenance funds to cover the first 9 months of your studies (based on the rates set by UKVI) in pounds sterling. You can find a breakdown of costs [here](#). If your studies are shorter than 12 months you must have the full amount for fees and sufficient maintenance funds a maximum of 9 months. Remember currency fluctuations can have a serious impact on your bank account, which must be kept at the amount equivalent to that required in Pounds Sterling GBP, using the [OANDA](#) currency convertor.
- > If you are using funds held in your (or your parent/guardian's) personal bank account the funds must have been held for at least 28 consecutive days. **The balance must not fall below the required amount at any point in that 28 day period and the financial evidence to demonstrate that these funds have been held for 28 days or more must be less than 31 days old by the time you submit and pay for your visa application.**
- > If your partner is applying for a visa or already holds one, then you may use funds in their bank account, but you will be required to **evidence your relationship.**
- > If you are not funding your studies from your **personal** or from your parent/guardian's **personal** resources, you can demonstrate that you have official financial sponsorship. Only certain types of organisation will be considered by UKVI as official financial sponsors. These include governments, universities and international organisations. Companies can only qualify if they are classed as international (with a trading office in more than one country).



- > If you receive an academic or educational loan from your government or from a government-sponsored student loan scheme you can use a letter from them as evidence. Please read the [Home Office guidance](#) for details of the full requirements.

Evidence of your funds must be presented in a format acceptable to the UK visa authorities.

You can find more information by clicking [here](#).

Step 3: Supporting Documents

Your CAS will also list the qualifications that were used to assess your suitability for your chosen degree programme. You must submit the qualifications listed on your CAS with your visa application. Acceptable documents are the degree certificate/diploma and/or final, official transcript.

Any documents not in English, including financial evidence, must have an official translation.

Step 4: English Language Requirements

Please note, unless you are joining an English language course, as stipulated in your Certificate of Acceptance, the University uses its own methods to assess your English language ability. Although you may have submitted an IELTS, PTE Academic, TOEFL, Cambridge Proficiency or Cambridge Advanced test as evidence of your proficiency in English, you are not required to submit that test document with your visa application. Alternatively, if you hold a degree from a majority English-speaking country, or are a national of one of these countries, this will be noted instead.

UK Visas or UKVI considers certain countries to be majority English speaking and nationals of these countries are exempt from taking a language test. **The list of English speaking countries** is available by visiting the UK Government [website](#).

If you are joining an Academic English or an English Pre-session course your CAS will include details of your IELTS Academic for UKVI test results. In this case you MUST submit the original IELTS Academic for UKVI Test Report Form with your visa application.



Step 5: Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

Some Science and Technology programmes require an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate. Your offer letter will confirm whether or not you need one of these. If you do not require ATAS clearance, you can skip to the next section.

You can apply for ATAS clearance 6 months before your programme start date. The ATAS certificate must be valid when you submit the visa application. When applying for ATAS clearance, you must use the same passport that you intend to use when you apply for a visa. The details on your ATAS certificate must be the same as the details on your CAS.

- > It's free to apply for your ATAS certificate, and you must have one before you submit a visa application.
- > If your programme requires ATAS clearance, please note that you can apply for clearance before your CAS has been issued.
- > You can apply for clearance before you have accepted your offer.
- > You can apply for clearance if your offer is still conditional.

If you submit a visa application before you receive the ATAS clearance certificate, your visa application will be refused. In addition, the University will not allow you to register if you don't have valid ATAS clearance.

You can find more information on ATAS certificates within the ATAS section of the UK Government's website by clicking [here](#).

Step 6: Tuberculosis (TB) Certificate

You'll need to have a tuberculosis (TB) test if you're coming to the UK for more than 6 months and are resident in any of the countries listed on the UK Government's website, please click [here](#).

If your test shows that you don't have TB, you'll be given a certificate which is valid for six months. You must include this certificate with your visa application.

Step 7: Credibility Interview

Credibility interviews have been introduced by the UKVI as part of the Student visa application process to ensure that only genuine students are coming to study in the UK.

Information to help you understand the Credibility Interview process can be found on our website by clicking [here](#).

Step 8: Healthcare Surcharge

As part of your Student visa application, you will be required to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge - IHS. This will give you access to the NHS (National Health Service) but you may still be required to pay for some services. The amount you need to pay will be calculated as part of the online visa application process. The payment then has to be made before you can complete the final steps of your visa application.

More information can be found on the UK Government's healthcare webpages by clicking [here](#).



Step 9: Accommodation

We recommend that you arrange accommodation before you arrive in Aberdeen. We suggest that you wait until your visa has been issued before you accept an offer of accommodation. We recommend you use the University's address on your visa application in the meantime. Information on University accommodation, including how to apply, can be found on our website by clicking [here](#).

> Living on campus is truly part of the University and Student Life experience. We have an impressive range of accommodation (both standard and en-suite) to meet all your requirements and budget. With a guarantee of an offer of accommodation you are only one click away from reserving your room.

> **Bringing your family?** There are limited choices on or near campus. The accommodation team will be happy to help. For further information please visit the accommodation section of our website by clicking [here](#).

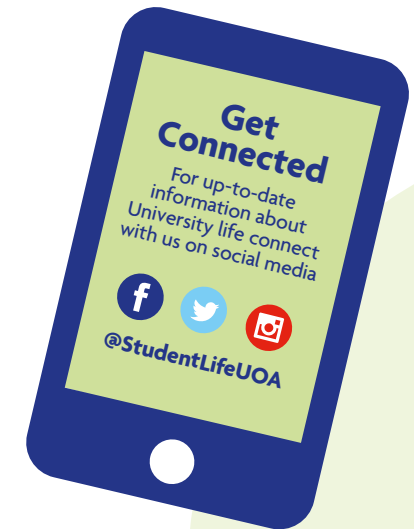
Remember, when booking accommodation, that you are entering into a contract. Please read the contract carefully and make sure that you understand it before accepting the offer of accommodation.

Step 10: New Student Website and App

We know there is lots to do and think about before you arrive but don't worry, we are here to help. The new student website contains all the information you need to prepare for and settle into your student life.

> It is packed with all the essential information you need to start your university journey including step by step instructions on registration, Orientation, Events and much more.

We will also be running some pre-registration events to help you get ready for your arrival into Aberdeen and lots of events and activities during Welcome Week. Explore the [new student website](#).



Travelling to the UK

Arriving in Aberdeen

Aberdeen is a well-connected city, with daily flights to and from major international airports such as Amsterdam, and London.

There is also a central bus and train station which provides easy access to our beautiful campus.

Please check our website by clicking **here** for up-to-date information on transport options, including making your way to campus and accommodation.

When arriving at the Aberdeen airport, Border Control may ask you some questions related to your studies such as your course or accommodation. You can get information on getting to your accommodation by visiting our **Arrival Support web page**.



What to pack

Pack

Remember to check if you require any of the following, and pack them in your hand luggage

- **Travel documents**
 - Passport and visa
 - Flight tickets and any other travel documents
 - University documents
 - Evidence of financial support for fees and maintenance
 - Evidence of TB screening if this was required as part of your visa process
 - Travel insurance documents
 - Accommodation details

Make sure you take photocopies of all your important documents, packing these into your hand baggage

Electrical adaptor

to turn your plug into a British electrical plug

UK currency

for initial costs (please do not carry large amounts of cash)

Travel insurance

for your journey to the UK

Any prescription medicine

and a letter from your doctor in English explaining any pre-existing medical conditions

Warm clothes

and an umbrella or waterproof coat and winter footwear/shoes

Toothbrush & small toiletries kit

Remember to check the weight restrictions for your hold luggage and current restrictions on bringing liquids with your airline.

What not to pack

Don't Pack

Milk and meat products

There are strict rules governing the import of milk and meat products from non-European countries

Other food items

including fish, shellfish, honey, eggs, and certain types of fruit and vegetables - there are strict limits that will depend on the country you are travelling from

Pepper spray/mace

Anyone found with illegal products in their possession when they are entering the UK could be fined or receive a prison sentence. If you are unsure what you cannot bring in to the UK, you can find out more by visiting the UK Government's [website](#)

Most kitchen and bedroom items you can buy cheaply at local homeware stores here, so please do not bring pots, pans, knives, plates, sheets, pillows, or duvets.

Check out our handy online checklists



Arriving at University

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) Collection

If you are studying in the UK for six months or longer and have applied for a Student visa, you will be issued with a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), unless you are an EEA national, in which case your full visa will be issued as an online digital status document. BRP is a small, credit-card sized card, which details the validity of your Student visa and your visa conditions.

Details of where to collect the BRP should be detailed on the decision letter you will receive from UKVI once your Student visa has been granted. **This letter is important, please keep it safe!**

You should collect your BRP within 10 days of arriving in the UK as it will allow you to register at the University. Please check carefully and contact the International Student Advisers here if you think there is a mistake on your BRP.

Online Registration

To become a fully registered student here at the University of Aberdeen, you need to complete online registration. This can begin before you arrive, and we advise that you complete it before Welcome Week.

Follow the step-by-step guide on the New Student webpage by clicking [here](#).



Right to Study Check

If you are a new international student commencing your studies at the University you **must complete** your Right to Study Check and fully register by your latest course start date – even if you are not in the UK.

Please visit the **immigration and student visas web page** for full information on what you need to do.

Check out the **new student** section of our website by clicking [here](#).

Payment of Tuition Fees

To make things easier for you, the University of Aberdeen offers a variety of ways you can pay your tuition fees, including; up front & online, via bank transfer, through a sponsor, or by payment plans. Please click [here](#) or speak to a member of the InfoHub team on arrival or please **email** to get more information on the way you would like to make payment.

Please remember that a minimum payment of 50% of the self-funded tuition fee should be paid at registration with the balance being paid 30 days from date of invoice.



Settling in & starting your programme



University Orientation & Academic induction

After Online Registration, you need to complete the **University's Orientation** programme. Orientation takes you through all the essential information you need as you prepare your student life.

During Welcome Week is you can also take part in our **Orientation events**. Visit the new student website or the Student Guide app to be kept up to date. You should also attend your **Academic School Induction**.

Open a Bank Account

Avoid carrying large amounts of cash around with you by opening a bank account as soon as possible. You will need some key documents to open your first student bank account: • A bank letter from the University • Your passport • Your Unconditional Letter of Acceptance (CAS Letter) • Proof of your Aberdeen address (such as accommodation contract) • Your visa (if applicable)

Once you have completed registration and have a home and term address showing in your **Student Hub**, a bank letter will be emailed to your University account. If your preferred bank is not included in the electronic letter or if the bank has requested a letter addressed to them, you can access a hard copy of your bank letter by visiting **Infohub**.

Register for a GP & Dentist

It is important that you register with a doctor and dentist as soon as possible, preferably within two weeks of your arrival in Aberdeen. Please note that if you hold a Student visa and you have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as part of your visa application you will be able to access National Health Service (NHS) treatment when you arrive in Scotland but you will need to pay for dental treatment.

Information on how to sign up for a GP and dentist can be found **here**, under the 'Medical Care' tab.

Submit your Council Tax Exemption Letter

Council tax is a local taxation system on domestic property. If you're living in University accommodation you're exempt from paying. The same applies to students who live alone or share the rent with other students. If you're in doubt, you can check with our International Student Advisers regarding any Council Tax query. The University will inform Aberdeen City Council of your student status when you are fully registered.

However, if you are asked by your Council for evidence of your student status, you can access your Council Tax Exemption Certificate by emailing Infohub **here**.

Buy your TV Licence

In Scotland, you need to be covered by a licence to watch or record live television programmes on any channel, or download or watch BBC programmes on iPlayer. This could be on any device, including a television, desktop computer, laptop, mobile phone, tablet, games console, digital box or DVD/VHS recorder. If you do have any of the above without a valid licence, you risk prosecution and a maximum penalty of up to £1,000, plus any legally costs and/or compensation you may be ordered to pay. More information on TV licences is available **here**. Beware of TV Licence scams. Only use this official website.

Consider Getting Insurance

You should take out a personal possessions insurance policy which covers against theft, damage or accidental loss, particularly of expensive items. You can obtain further advice on crime prevention and personal safety from Police Scotland **here**.

Keeping Safe

There are a number of resources to help keep you safe during your time in Scotland:

Advice & Information - **Police Scotland**

Online student safety guide - **Police Scotland**

UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - **Frauds and scams**

Working in Scotland

If you hold a Student visa and are a full-time student, you're usually allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during term and full-time during vacations. More information is available [here](#), under the 'Working in the UK' tab.

If you intend to start working in the UK, you need to apply for a National Insurance (NI) Number. More details can be found [here](#).

Driving in Scotland

If you hold a valid driving licence either from your own country or an international licence, you are allowed to drive in Britain for a period of twelve months starting from your date of arrival, provided that your licence is still valid during that period. If you hold an EEU/EEA driving licence you are allowed to drive in Britain for as long as it's valid for or until the age of 70. Please use the **UK Government tool** to check your eligibility. If you own a car in Scotland, you must have car insurance and pay for road tax. If you own a car in Scotland, all motor vehicles must be registered, taxed and insured. If the car is more than three years old, the car must have a certificate of roadworthiness, known as an MOT Certificate obtained annually through an MOT Test.

Attendance Monitoring

The Immigration Authorities expect you to meet various responsibilities under the terms of your Student visa. If you fail to maintain a strong attendance record, the University will be legally obliged to stop sponsoring your visa. Please ensure you keep in touch with your School to let them know of any absences you expect to have and use our Student Hub to update any changes to your address or other contact details. If you have any questions about attendance monitoring, please **email** the Immigration Compliance team.

More information on Attendance Monitoring can be found **here**.

Settling in

We understand that moving to a new country can come with its challenges, which is why we have created plenty of resources to help you settle in.

Students' Union

The Students' Union is a student-led organisation, here to support, empower and represent students.

With over 55+ clubs and 180+ societies to join there is something for everyone.

To find out more click [here](#).



New Student Website

We know there is lots to do and think about before you arrive but don't worry, we are here to help.

This new student **website** contains all the information you need to prepare for and settle into your student life.

Student Support Services

If you have concerns about your course, or need advice on any issues, our Student Advisers are on hand to help. We also offer a free and confidential counselling service all year round.

To find out more click [here](#).

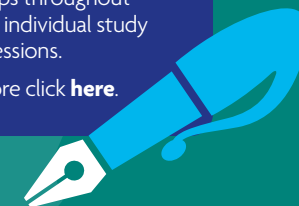
Student Learning Service

Offering 'studying in the UK' sessions, the SLS is designed to help all students achieve their full potential. The SLS offers free of charge workshops throughout the year as well as individual study advice sessions.

To find out more click [here](#).

More advice on settling into Aberdeen & Scotland

The city of Aberdeen truly has something for everyone. It is a vibrant modern city, with striking granite architecture, a rich and inspiring history, a dynamic modern arts scene and a stunning, dramatic coastline. Visit this **webpage** for more information on getting around campus and the city, and life in Scotland.



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The information in this guide was correct at the time of producing this digital publication (June 2023, and relates to September 2023 entry only). It does not apply to anything beyond this entry date.

The information in this guide focuses on international students who are classified as overseas fees.

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