Welcome

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

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Remember to contact your International Officer if you have any questions about your application or arrival in Aberdeen. You can find out your International Officer’s contact details by clicking here.
Preparing for your departure

Your Visa

Most international students require a Tier 4 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 Advisors outlining your circumstances and attaching a copy of your passport.

Preparing for the Visa Application

It is important that you allow enough time for your visa application to be processed before your programme start date. Visa applications can be submitted three months before your start date, not before. If you are due to commence your studies on 10 January 2017, the earliest you can submit your Tier 4 application is 11 October 2016.

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 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 Advisors.
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 Tier 4 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, confirmation of how your studies will be funded.

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 Home Office’s 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 the UKVI) in pounds sterling. If your studies are shorter than 12 months you must have the full amount for fees and sufficient maintenance funds for the full duration of your studies. Remember currency fluctuations can have a serious impact on your bank account, which must be kept at the appropriate level in Sterling.
- All funds must have been held in your (or your parent/guardian’s) personal bank account 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 and must be less than 31 days old by the time you submit and pay for your visa application.
- If you are not funding your studies from your personal or from your parent/guardian’s personal resources, you must demonstrate that you have official financial sponsorship. Only certain types of organisation will be considered by the UKVI as official financial sponsors. These include international companies, universities and international organisations. Private companies do NOT qualify as official financial sponsors.

Evidence of your funds must be presented in a format acceptable to the UK visa authorities. Currency exchange rates should be calculated by clicking here.

You can find more information 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. Photocopies or scanned copies are not acceptable.

Step 4: English Language Requirements

Please note, 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.

The Home Office 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 here.

If you are joining an Academic English or an English Pre-sessional 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 9 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 (6) months. You must include this certificate with your visa application.

Step 7: Healthcare Surcharge

As part of your Tier 4 visa application, you will be required to pay a Healthcare Surcharge. This will give you access to the NHS (National Health Service) but you may still be required to pay for some services. It is mandatory to pay for this before completing your visa application. More information can be found on the UK Government’s healthcare webpages by clicking here.

Step 8: 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. Information on University accommodation, including how to apply, can be found on our website by clicking here.

There is more information on accommodation within section 3 of this guide.

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.
Travelling to the UK

Arriving in Aberdeen

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

There is also a central bus and train station which provide easy access to our beautiful campus. You’ll be well placed to make your way to your accommodation with ease.

To find out more click here.

Please check our website by clicking here, for up to date information with regards to transport options including making your way to campus and accommodation.
What to pack

Pack

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

- **Travel documents**
  please click here for advice on important documents to pack
- **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 explaining any pre-existing medical conditions
- **Warm clothes**
  and an umbrella or waterproof coat
- **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 clicking here.

Most kitchen & bedroom items you can get at local homeware stores here, so please do not bring pots, pans, knives, plates, sheets, pillows, or duvets.
Arriving at University

Accommodation
The University of Aberdeen offers guaranteed individual occupancy accommodation to all students. Make sure you apply by the deadline so you don’t miss out on this opportunity!

If you are moving to Aberdeen with your family you will need to find private accommodation off campus. The University of Aberdeen’s Students’ Association (AUSA) have a useful database of local private properties. You can find this on the accommodation section of our website by clicking here.

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) Collection
Most Tier 4 students will need to collect a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) when they arrive in the UK. This is a small, credit-card sized permit, which shows your permission to stay in the UK during your studies. Details of where to collect the BRP will be on the letter you will receive from the UKVI when you receive notification of your successful visa application. You should collect your BRP within 10 days of arriving in the UK as it will allow you to register at the University. Check out our BRP collection guide by clicking here.

Registration
Once you have collected your BRP, you are able to register at the University of Aberdeen. There are seven registration steps, more details of which can be found on 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 email to get more information on the way you would like to make payment.

Police registration
It will state on the entry clearance sticker in your passport if you need to register with the police. You can confirm if you are from a country that requires Police Registration on the following website, by clicking here.

Please take the following items to your Police Registration appointment:
>
£34 registration fee - cash only
>
Your own passport
>
Biometric Residence Permit (if you have been issued with one)
>
1 x recent passport-sized photograph
>
Certificate of Acceptance or student ID card from the University
>
Proof of Aberdeen address (for example, accommodation contract, or tenancy agreement)

Check out the New Students section of our website, please click here
Settling in & starting your programme

School Induction
Your school may provide specific induction activities for students on your degree programme. You should keep an eye on your email account for details on what these activities will be.

AUSA
With over 16,000 members, AUSA coordinates the 60 sports clubs, 150 student societies, and various events throughout the year including; Freshers’ Week, Graduation Ball, Sports Ball, and the Torcher Parade. AUSA also offers support in finding part-time employment, finding off campus student housing, and various volunteering opportunities.

To find out more click here

Connection with AUSA
www.ausa.org.uk
Aberdeen University Students’ Association
abdnunisa
@ausatweet
theausatube

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 your Portal to update any changes to your address or other contact details.

International Centre
The International Centre is located in the Hub and as well as organising the international orientation and Simply Living Workshops, the IC hosts the Language Exchange Programme, English Language Groups, and the Go Abroad Office Hours.

The IC also hosts various events throughout the year, including; American Thanksgiving, Guy Fawkes Night, Chinese New Year, and many more. You can visit the International Centre during opening hours to have a chance to visit different places around Scotland (Loch Ness, Isle of Skye, several castles and distilleries).

To find out more click 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.

International Centre & Simply Living Workshop Series
The International Centre is here to help with cultural adjustment through its ‘Simply Living’ workshop series which covers everything from transportation and grocery shopping, to budgeting, British culture and etiquette among others.

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

AUSA & Freshers’ Week
With so many clubs and societies to get involved in it is easy to make new friends when trying out new activities and attending different events. The first week you arrive at the University you will be busy getting to know campus, and meeting your new friends either in halls of residence, through events, or in a society!

To find out more click here

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

To find out more click here
Aberdeen continues to pursue best practice and high standards of service for all students. If you would like to receive this document in an alternative format, please contact the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service for more information.

Tel: +44 (0)1224 272090  
Fax: +44 (0)1224 272576  
Email: study@abdn.ac.uk  
Web: abdn.ac.uk/international

The information in this guide was correct at the time of going to print, October 2016, and relates to January 2017 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.

The University of Aberdeen is a charity registered in Scotland, No: SC013683