



A GUIDE TO STUDYING AT A UK UNIVERSITY

Everything you need to know about studying in the UK



Thinking of becoming a student at a UK university but not sure what to expect? This guide will provide you with all the answers that you need to find out what life is like when studying in the UK.

1. How to budget at university

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HOW TO **BUDGET** AT UNIVERSITY

Budgeting at university is something every student must learn to do. In order to avoid getting yourself into a financial mess, you must have a clear plan in place so that you know what you can spend each week. But what do you need to consider?

Accommodation

Your university accommodation will no doubt be one of the most expensive chunks of your total outgoings for the year. University halls of residence differ in prices depending on factors like the distance from your campus, room type and the facilities that are on offer. You won't have to worry about your utility bills, as your water and energy costs are included within the monthly cost.

You'll be spending a lot of time in your halls of residence, whether it's sleeping, eating, studying or socialising. So, you're going to want to choose a nice hall of residence that you'll feel comfortable in. Plus, there'll be times where you need to study hard without distraction, so try and find the right accommodation within your budget that has the right facilities for you.

Food

We're pretty certain you're going to need food to survive your time at university, so you must forecast it into your budget. Food can be as expensive or as cheap as you want it to be, so don't go living beyond your means and eating out every night if you can't afford to do so. Cooking in bulk and freezing extra portions is a great tip to save money and reduce wastage.

Obviously, there'll be times where you want to eat out with friends - which is fine as long as you factor it into your budget. Also, in some cases, if you live in catered halls of residence, some meals will be included with your monthly rent.



Study costs

Just to be clear - we're not talking about your course fees here. You're also going to need to buy extra things to assist your learning - for example, textbooks.

Some other common study-related costs are:

- Stationery
- Photocopying
- Printing
- Field trips
- Specialist equipment

Social life

Putting money aside each month for social activities is an important part of the university lifestyle. It can't be study, study, study all the time. You have to find your way of relaxing and clearing your mind - especially around exam periods.

There's no fixed cost when it comes to planning your social life; it's completely down to each individual. But, keep in mind that you can't get involved with everything and expect to still have money left over. Make sure that you're honest with yourself about your social life, but stick to the budget you draw up and just say no to that one extra night out, meal or cinema trip per month - however tempting it may be.

Travel costs

Depending on where your accommodation is in comparison to the university or the local amenities, you're going to need to factor in the costs of a bus or Metro pass. We'd advise you to look into buying passes as in the long run, they work out cheaper than paying daily to use the services.

Insurance

If you're bringing any particularly expensive items with you, for example, a nice watch, a bike or an expensive laptop, then you might want to consider taking out further insurance. Your hall of residence may come with contents insurance, but sometimes they often cap the price limit on the cover.

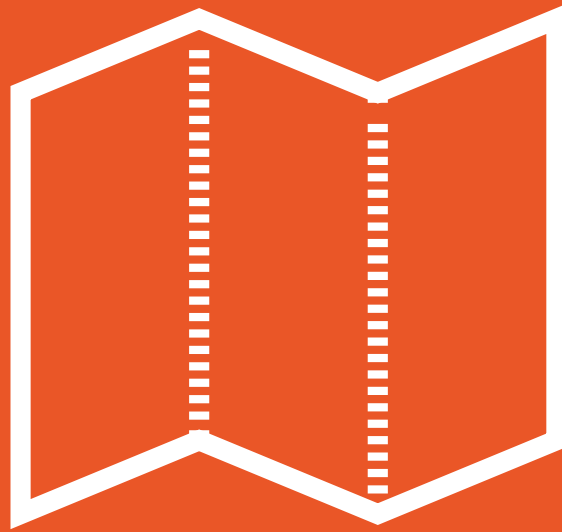
To avoid having an accident and break something that you can't easily replace, we advise looking into your own cover.

Television

Not all halls of residence come with a TV licence, which means that if you plan on watching live TV on any device (whether it's a tablet, phone or actual television), you're going to need one. You can find out all about these at your local post office or the [TV Licensing website](#).

TV licences aren't the only cost when it comes to your entertainment. Don't forget the common subscription packages like Netflix and Amazon Prime for all your favourite TV shows and movies to pass the time when you're relaxing. Factor these into your budget too.

Budgeting can be tricky at first, especially if you've never done it before. However, after a few months of sticking to the plan and seeing it work, it'll get much easier and become more natural to you. If you need help starting off with your budget plan, then use this [International Student Calculator](#) to take the first step.

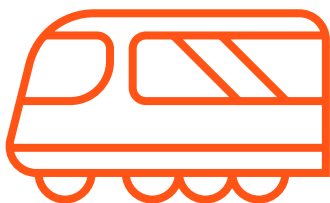


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EXPLORING THE UK? **YOUR SIMPLE TRAVEL GUIDE**

Exploring a new country is always fascinating. Seeing how the different cultures are brought together, capturing those breathtaking landscapes and seeing all the hotspots and attractions are all important. It's quick, easy and affordable to travel around the UK and all destinations are reachable within a day.

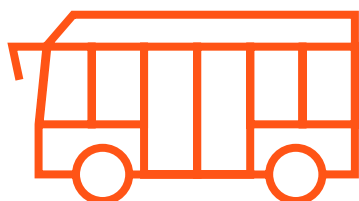
Whether it's the tranquil countryside, impressive mountains or the vibrant city life, the UK is a great place to travel around in a single day. But in order to see all of this properly, it's worth knowing how easily you can get around the country and what benefits are on offer to students.



Trains

Each major city in the UK has at least one main train station that connects them to the rest of the country. Trains run up and down the country on an hourly basis at a minimum, which means that should you need to be somewhere, you'll easily be able to find the right train to get you to your destination.

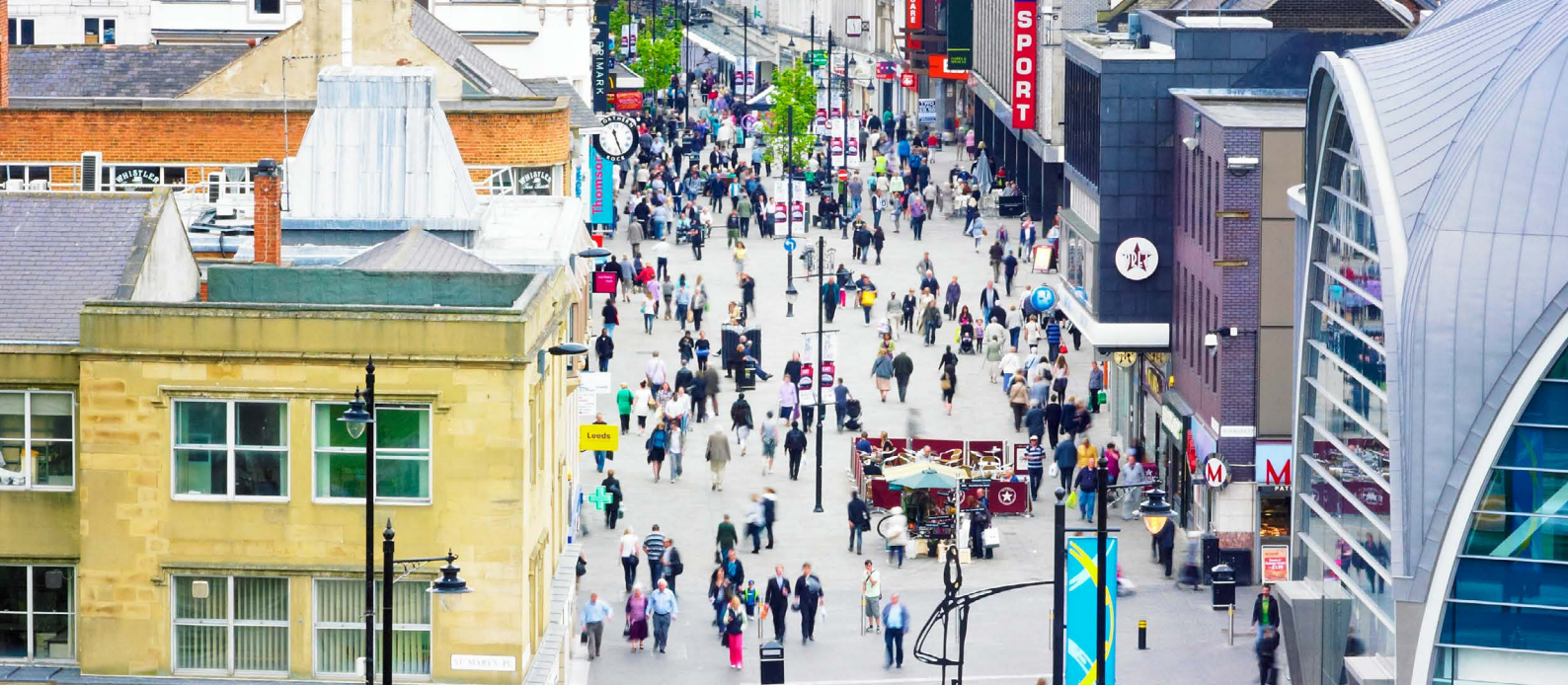
Train prices in the UK can sometimes be expensive. For example, if you book last minute or you're looking to go to a popular destination. However, as a student, you can take advantage of the 16-25 railcard which can get young people and students 30 percent off standard rail fares. To access this discount, [sign up here](#).



Buses

Local buses are a staple in any major city in the UK. Whether it's going to the shops, to and from university or just to see a friend, hopping on a bus is a cheap and easy way to get around. You can either pay per trip, or most services will offer daily and weekly passes to cut costs if you know you're going to be using them frequently.

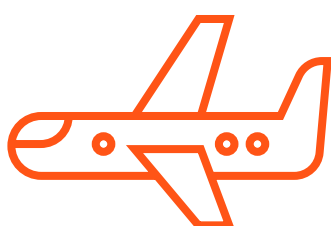
Buses don't just stop locally either. Both National Express and Megabus are two popular choices for country-wide journeys that link the UK's major cities together. These services are usually cheaper than the train, which bodes well if you're on a tight budget. Plus, you're eligible for a 16-25 coachcard, which enables you to a third off bus fares with National Express. [Find out more here](#).



Taxis

Sometimes, public transport might be too infrequent or drops you off in an inconvenient location. In these cases, you're going to need a taxi.

Uber is a really handy app for you to have on your phone. You can order taxis at the touch of a button and be inside them within minutes. The taxis are cashless too, so you needn't worry about having to get to an ATM before paying the driver. The payments are automated straight from your bank account.



Budget airlines

In addition to the above methods of travel, you can also take internal flights around the UK. You might find that flying is a cheaper alternative - as well as quicker.

In terms of international flights, the UK is also ideally located, geography-wise. You can take advantage of budget airlines to see more of Europe and North and South America.

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A QUICK AND EASY GUIDE TO THE **VISA** **APPLICATION** **PROCESS**

There are a number of UK visas which you'll need to study here in the UK, but the main student routes are Tier 4 and Short Term Study. Most students coming to the UK for programmes of more than six months will apply for Tier 4 General.



Please note that whilst all of this information was correct at the time of writing, we have only used information from the UK government website. As you can imagine, rules and regulations change from time to time. For this reason, we will always keep [this page](#) up to date with our latest advice and suggestions.

However, here's a summary of what you need to know.

How to apply for Tier 4 General

You will need to make preparations to apply for your Tier 4 visa well in advance of your arrival in the UK, taking note of the conditions in your offer letter. When you've met all of the conditions of your offer, you'll be sent a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). If you have all of the additional supporting documentary evidence you require, plus your CAS, you can apply for your Tier 4 visa.

When can you apply?

You can only apply for your Tier 4 visa three months before the start of your programme at the earliest. Processing times vary from country to country and different levels of service may apply for an additional fee.

How long can I stay in the UK?

You will normally be granted some time on your visa to allow you to enter the UK one to four weeks before the start of your programme. Tier 4 visas have an additional period at the end of the programme to allow you to wrap up your affairs in the UK, or to give you time to apply for another visa.

What can I do in the UK?

Tier 4 visa holders can study the programme for which their visa was granted with their Tier 4 sponsor. Tier 4 visa holders may be able to work in the UK, subject to the conditions of their visa.

Arriving in the UK

When you apply for your visa, you will receive a vignette (sticker) in your passport to allow you to enter the UK. If your Tier 4 visa is longer than six months, you will need to collect a Biometric Residence Permit card on arrival in the UK.

For more information on each of these points, read more [here](#) from the UK's Government website which clears everything up in an easy-to-understand way.



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RUSSELL GROUP VS NON-RUSSELL GROUP: THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE UK

Choosing a university is one of the biggest decisions you'll ever have to make. It's hard enough when it's a university in your own country, but when it's thousands of miles away, the choice might seem even more difficult. To make things a little easier, we'll run through the different types of universities in the UK.

Russell Group universities

Established in 1994, the Russell Group represents 24 leading UK universities that are committed to industry-leading research and an outstanding learning experience for all students.

Many of these institutions were formed in the 1800s. Their commitment ensures they get the majority of funding from the UK government, allowing them to continue to drive innovation and produce high-level graduates.

Students at these universities not only benefit from being part of a global research community, but they can also enjoy a rich and vibrant social culture as well. Russell Group universities offer a multicultural experience with societies to suit every hobby or interest.

Plus, because they're based in major UK cities, there's always something to do or somewhere to visit.

Newcastle University is a founding member of this group and we're joined by other prestigious universities like Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge.

Ancient universities

Interestingly, those three universities just mentioned are amongst the oldest universities in the UK and were founded hundreds of years ago. These are still part of the prestigious Russell Group and are also known as 'Ancient Universities.'

Due to being so historical, these Ancient Universities often have lecture rooms and corridors housed in hundreds of years old buildings. Oxford is the oldest and is able to trace its roots back to 1096. Did you know that the University of Oxford is older than the Aztec civilisation?

Polytechnic and metropolitan universities

These universities have evolved from Polytechnics, Further Education Colleges and other higher education institutions to become the popular universities that they are today. They received their university status more recently, relatively speaking, although they may have educational roots that go much further back.

Even though they're often the second founded university in a city, each will have its own particular expertise. For example, the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University are both in the same city and each has its own strengths.

That's not to say that Polytechnic and Metropolitan Universities aren't wonderful places to study. Often, they specialise in particular subjects and course topics, ranking higher than 'more prestigious' universities for specific schools.

These universities are often smaller and can be in smaller cities or towns, so they might not be able to offer the same variety of social activities as Russell Group alternatives in the bigger cities.



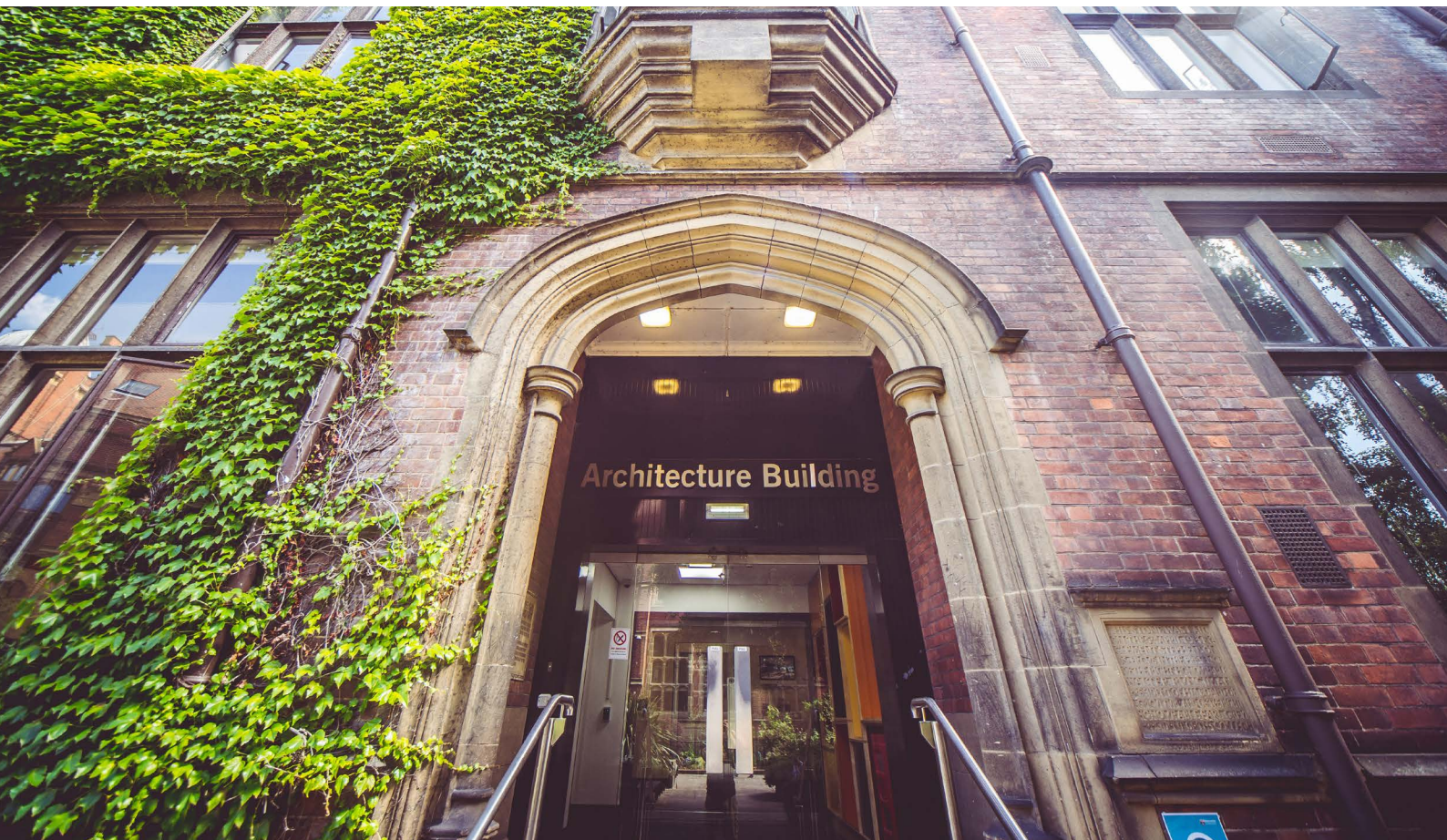
Which type of university should you choose?

So, we now know that there are three different types of university in the UK - ancient, Russell Group and metropolitan. You'll be moving to the other side of the world, so you need to make sure that you choose the right one to suit your wants and needs.

The ideal university should have a welcoming community which makes it easy for you to make friends once you've arrived. They should have an impressive campus that's an eclectic mix of buildings and workspaces. For example, here at Newcastle University, we have all kinds of things to welcome students to the community.

Most importantly, they should provide an excellent learning experience that ensures you graduate with a degree that will help you to start a rewarding career in your chosen industry.

The choice is yours. The UK has a fantastic mix of different universities so there's something for everyone.



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WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM **UK ACCOMMODATION?**

Student accommodation plays a huge part in your university experience, so you've got to make sure that the right decision is made. Your options are...

University halls of residence

If you're living away from home for the first time, halls of residence can be a great option. These are often large buildings filled with other students - likely some or all in the same situation as you. So, you definitely won't be the only one a little anxious about life away from home. They're a great place to meet new people and even strike up lifelong friendships.

Halls of residence are usually situated near university campuses, which is handy for those 9am lectures that seem so hard to wake up for. Each student has their own room, which typically comes with communal kitchen and bathrooms or even an en-suite. Some universities, such as Newcastle, even offer rooms for couples and families.

Private accommodation

If you don't like the idea of sharing with other students, then private accommodation could be the answer. Your own independence could be important to you, so a studio flat where you have your own privacy and company may be perfect.

Private accommodation isn't limited to just studio flats. Some students choose to share with friends who already live there, which is obviously advantageous as you know who you're going to live with. There are also house shares where you can choose to live with strangers. Who knows - you might meet a good friend.

Boarding with a family is another great way to live at university. It can be a great insight into the culture of the country you're studying in, plus it's a great way to improve your English skills and interact with others.

Living alone for the first time can be pretty daunting, but there's no need to worry. Culture shock and homesickness are common but there's support available from various teams at university. Living at university really is a great experience - it's all down to how you make it.



READY TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT UNIVERSITY LIFE?

Does the university lifestyle sound appealing to you? If you're ready to find out more about what Newcastle University has to offer, download our free prospectus below. This amazing university has something for everybody and the city is packed full of friendly people, bustling nightlife and more.

Newcastle University can help you start your journey of self-discovery. Be inspired to think differently and gain the confidence to challenge things around you. Join our network of students, from current to graduates, who can help you become career-ready and accomplish great things.

There's a reason why we're one of the best universities in the UK, but don't just take our word for it. Download our prospectus below and find out more.

DOWNLOAD THE PROSPECTUS

