



CAREER
POWERED
EDUCATION

International Welcome Guide

Thank you for choosing the University of Bedfordshire as the next step in your academic journey. By getting involved in all that we offer, I have every confidence that you will thrive and succeed in whatever you choose to do after completing your studies with us.

To fully prepare you for success, we have put together this guide with all the essential information that you need, both before you travel and after you arrive. It is really important that you read everything in this guide very carefully, especially when it comes to what you need to do to register, and stay registered!

On behalf of the International Office, welcome to the UK and to Bedfordshire. We look forward to seeing you on campus very soon.

Adrian Dutch

Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)

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Click or scan to download our MyBedsLife app!



COUNTDOWN to Welcome Week...

8 weeks
to go

CAS issued

We will issue your CAS letter, no later than 8 weeks before the start of welcome week.

7 weeks
to go

Apply for your visa

Make sure to apply for your visa as soon as you receive your CAS to allow the maximum amount of time for processing.

6 weeks
to go

Relax :)

This is your time to relax a bit before your student journey begins. Spend time with family and friends and be sure to congratulate yourself on being accepted!

4 weeks
to go

Attend a pre-arrival webinar

Our pre-arrival webinars cover a wide range of topics to help prepare you for travel to - and study in - the UK. We recommend that you attend about a week or so before you plan to travel.

Book your accommodation

Be sure to book your accommodation before you travel to the UK. You may be asked during your journey where you will be staying while in the UK and you will need to have an exact address to answer. You can book accommodation on campus at beds.ac.uk/accommodation



3 weeks
to go

Travel to the UK

Here's where it starts to get fun - travelling to the UK! Make sure that you arrive in the UK well ahead of your welcome week start date to make sure you have time to complete all of the registration process in time.

Check in to your accommodation

Wherever you are staying, you will need to check in/collect your keys. We recommend you try to arrive in the UK between 9am and 3pm as during these times estate agents and other companies are more likely to be open and therefore able to easily provide you with the keys.

2 weeks
to go

Attend your Document Check

When you have sent a copy of your visa proving you are in the UK, you will be sent an invite to book an appointment.



1 week
to go

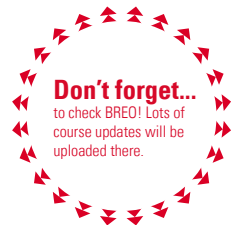
Register online

After your Document Check, you will be sent information on how to register online via email. Make sure you register as soon as possible. If you have any issues at all, get in touch with SiD either by coming on to campus, or by emailing sid@beds.ac.uk

It's here!

Welcome week

Now for the fun part - welcome week! Get the chance to meet your classmates and find out all about making the most of your time at Bedfordshire at International Orientation. Be sure to also attend all the events your faculty have planned for you! Plan to be on campus 2 or 3 times during welcome week at least - we have lots planned for you!



BEFORE you travel checklist...

Top tip...

booking a taxi in advance can save you a lot of money (and stress!)

Things to do...	✓
Send a copy of your vignette and eVisa share code to prearrival@beds.ac.uk as soon as you receive it	
Book your accommodation	
Book your flights	
Plan your travel from the airport to your accommodation	
Things to bring...in your hand luggage	✓
Passport	
Flight tickets	
Documents for registration: CAS letter, passport, vignette, English and Academic qualifications	
Travel insurance documents (if applicable)	
Details of your accommodation in the UK	
TB certificate (if applicable), and medical history to register with a GP	
One month's supply of any medication you take and an explanation in English of what it is	
Credit/Debit card - let your provider know you are travelling to prevent it being cancelled	
Driving licence if you plan to drive in the UK	
Laptop with at least 8GB of RAM (or purchase one when you arrive)	

Booking your flights

Make sure you book your flight well in advance - this will make things more affordable. It is best to try and arrive between 09:00 and 17:00, as public transport is more readily available and there will be more people around if you need to ask any questions.

The main London airports are London Gatwick and London Heathrow.

Planning your travel from the airport

Travelling to a new country can be stressful, especially if you haven't travelled internationally before. Be sure to plan ahead!

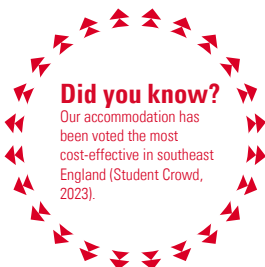
Are you going to take a taxi from the airport? Or are you going to use public transport? Or maybe a friend or family member will pick you up.

Whatever you choose to do, do your research and planning before you leave your home country to cut down on any stress on the day of travelling.

You can find travel routes and maps at beds.ac.uk/international

Plan your finances

It can take a few weeks to open a bank account in the UK, so plan your finances for the first few weeks before you leave. Be sure to tell your bank if you are bringing your debit/credit card with you so they know you will be making international payments. You can also bring a small amount of cash with you if you wish.



Booking your accommodation

Enjoy a safe, secure and affordable home away from home in our on-campus accommodation in Luton and Bedford. Living in university accommodation is the best way to meet your peers, make friends, and build a sense of stability in a new environment.

What are the benefits?

- **Safety first** - we have staff on-site 24 hours, and electronic fob and swipe card entry systems
- **All inclusive value** - your rent in Luton and Bedford includes all utility bills and contents insurance
- **Stay connected** - free Wi-Fi is included in our accommodation
- **Instant friends** - halls are a great way to meet new people

For more information about Fitzroy and Wenlock Court at our Luton campus visit:

beds.ac.uk/accommodation

For more information about Polhill Park at our Bedford campus visit:

beds.ac.uk/accommodation

WHAT to pack in your suitcase...

Clothes

Weather in the UK can be quite unpredictable. Temperatures range from highs of 30 degrees Celsius in the summer months, to -5 degrees Celsius in the winter. Don't worry if you can't find the space to pack an umbrella or bulky, warm clothes with you; there plenty of shops and markets in The Mall nearby.

Adaptors

There's nothing worse than running out of charge on your device, so it's a good idea to bring a travel power socket adapter with you. You can buy them from most general stores in the UK, but if you bring one with you, you can be fully charged right from when you land.

Registration is fully online, so you will need to have a charged device to be able to get registered as a student.

The UK operates on 220V power, so if you use a different current in your home country, you may need to bring a transformer with you in order to use your devices.

Mobile phones

If you are bringing your own phone with you, make sure to get a UK SIM when you arrive to avoid high charges and costs of communicating with those back home. Alternatively, you could buy a phone when you get here either as on pay-as-you-go or contract.

Sentimental items

Moving from your home country overseas can be daunting. It can help to bring some items from home to help you feel more at home. This could be things like teddy bears, photos or posters.

What not to bring...

There are some items that it may be best to leave at home. Things like kitchen utensils, knives, bulky winter clothing, bedding.

Whilst the vast majority of luggage makes it's way to the right place, sometimes luggage can be misplaced or lost. Try to avoid putting anything really valuable in your suitcase and keep it with you in your hand luggage, so you can keep hold of it at all times. This is why we would advise you to keep all your qualifications and documents with you, as well as any medical records and medication.

USEFUL websites to look at

About Bedfordshire

www.beds.ac.uk

About travel

National Express

www.nationalexpress.com

Megabus (cheap bus fares)

www.megabus.com

National Rail Enquiries (train tickets)

www.nationalrail.co.uk

The Trainline (train tickets)

www.thetrainline.com

Megatrain (cheap train fares)

www.megatrain.com

Circle Cars

www.circle-cars.com

About immigration

International Student Support

www.beds.ac.uk/international

UK Visa and Immigration

www.gov.uk/visas-immigration

UK Council for International Student Affairs

www.ukcisa.org.uk

About living in the UK

UKCISA: UK Council for International Student Affairs

www.ukcisa.org.uk

The British Council

www.educationuk.org

National Academic Recognition Information Centre UK (NARIC)

www.naric.org.uk

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk



AFTER you travel checklist...

Things to do...on your first day	✓
Pick up your keys and move in to your accommodation	
Send a copy of your vignette and eVisa share code to prearrival@beds.ac.uk	
Book your Document Check	
Let your family know you have arrived safely. Unpack, relax and enjoy yourself, you made it!	

Things to do...in your first week	✓
Attend your Document Check	
Register for your course and get your student ID card	
Access BREO and check your units and timetable	
Access your University email account and ensure you set up notifications on your devices	
Attend all your Welcome and Orientation events	
Register with a Doctor (GP)	
Open a UK bank account	
Check your emails regularly (a few times a day) so you don't miss any urgent emails from us	

If you need help...

If you have any issues with registration or accessing any of the university's systems, get in touch with the Student Information Desk (SiD)

sid@beds.ac.uk

First floor, Campus Centre, Luton Campus

First floor, Gateway Building, Bedford Campus

You can check out our resources for new students online at beds.ac.uk/international/new-international-students/

Don't forget...

You will need to show your BRP at Document Check, so do not send it to the DVLA until after we have seen it if you are planning on driving

WHAT YOU NEED to do in your first week...

Check your emails!

Your registration period will be a very busy time. You may receive a lot of emails from us, but it is important to read them all very carefully and follow any instructions within them.

We will not contact you unnecessarily, so please treat all emails from an **@beds.ac.uk** email address as urgent.

Open a UK bank account

It is very important to open a UK bank account as soon as you arrive. Making payments from a UK bank account is both faster and cheaper, as you will not have to wait days or weeks for the funds to arrive and you will not incur bank charges for exchanging from one currency to another.

Before you travel to the UK it is vital to ensure that you have enough money to cover living expenses and fees. You should not expect that a part-time job will cover these costs.

Register with a Doctor (GP)

You may get sick from time to time and may need to visit a Doctor. Please do this as soon as you arrive in the UK.

Do not wait until you get sick to register with a Doctor as you may not be able to get an appointment.

For information on how to find your nearest GP surgery and how to register, visit our new students page.



Welcome and orientation

Make sure you attend all your welcome and orientation events. You will receive an email with details of your international orientation session. Remember to also check BREQ for details of your course induction!

Register for your course

Once you have sent evidence you have arrived in the UK, we will invite you to book an on campus Document Check.

Attendance is mandatory and if you fail to attend, you may be terminated from your course and have visa sponsorship withdrawn.

We will need to see your:

- Original academic qualifications
- English language qualifications
- Current passport
- Visa (vignette)
- eVisa share code

Registration is fully online. You will receive a series of emails advising you how to go about this once you have completed your Document Check.

Look out for emails from noreply@beds.ac.uk and/or donotreply@beds.ac.uk

LIVING in the UK...

Culture shock

Choosing to study in another country is an enriching and rewarding experience with so many positives. It can however, have some challenges, especially in the beginning. You may experience a range of emotions as you move from the people and places you are familiar with, to those you are not. This is very common and normal, there's even a name for it; culture shock.

It may be simple things, like not being able to buy your favourite brand of snacks or even the weather! Or it can be more complex differences like religion and beliefs, social norms, and customs. Symptoms could be psychological or physical, like tiredness or sickness.

It's important to remember that this will likely be temporary and you may just need a little time to adjust. Be patient with yourself and take your time to get used to the British culture. Try to:

- Ask questions about things you are unsure of - this is a great way to find out more about British culture
- Ask for help if you need it! We have support systems in place at the university (you can contact sid@beds.ac.uk), but also talk to friends and family if you are struggling
- Make friends with a diverse range of people
- Not focus on things being 'different', rather than good or bad
- Immerse yourself in the language - practice makes progress! Be sure to attend our Academic Skills Training, and talk to a range of people to broaden your understanding
- Take care yourself! Eat healthily, exercise regularly and balance socialising with studying

British reserve

Visitors sometimes say they find British people a bit reserved. For instance, you might be surprised at how people tend not to start conversations with strangers on public transport or whilst queuing. They also tend to keep their distance and may not be comfortable with others being as close to them as you are used to in your home country. It's usually not a sign of unfriendliness but a way of respecting each other's privacy and personal space.

Queuing and punctuality

In the UK, being on time is really important for work, study and social events. If you think you'll be late or need to cancel an appointment, it's a good idea to contact ahead and apologise when you arrive.

Queuing (waiting in line) is also taken very seriously and happens almost everywhere, like in shops, banks, and at bus stops. You might find it amusing how strictly the order of the queue is kept. If you try to push in (queue-jump), you'll quickly become quite unpopular!

Money

In the UK, currency is made up of pounds (£) and pence (p). £1 is made up of 100p.

Coins: 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1, £2

Notes: £5, £10, £20, £50 (this is rarely used)



Most shops in the UK will accept both cash and card payments, though it is becoming more popular for places to not accept cash.

It is a good idea to open a bank account as soon as you arrive in the UK, so that you can have the option to pay by debit card/contactless, or add it to your digital wallet. The major high street banks are:

- Barclays
- Halifax
- HSBC
- Lloyd's
- NatWest
- Santander

Please and thank you (and sorry!)

British people say “please” and “thank you” a lot, even in situations where it might seem unusual in other countries. They even have a saying; remember your P’s and Q’s! For example, you might find it a bit odd to hear someone thanking a train driver or, even more curiously, saying “sorry” when someone else gets in their way!

Slang

As with any language, there are some informal or slang terms, and the British are no different! Here are some popular slang terms:

Slang term	What it means...
Alright	How are you?
Ta!	Thank you!
See you	Bye!
Chuffed	Happy
Gutted	Disappointed
Sarnie	A sandwich
Pint	A pint (568ml) of beer or lager
Cuppa	Cup of tea or coffee
Quid	£1
Fiver	£5
Tenner	£10
Grand	£1,000

If you’re not sure about what a word means, just ask. And try to find humour in any misunderstandings!

STUDYING in the UK...



Academic life

Studying in the UK may look very different to what you are used to in your home country. In the UK a lot of emphasis is placed on critical thinking and independent learning, which may come as a shock if you are used to something different.

In general, you can usually expect a mixture of:

- Exams
- Written assignments
- Assessments
- Group work
- Presentations
- Dissertations or vivas

To prepare yourself as best possible for your course, you are expected to attend your course-specific induction.

Academic Skills Training

As many international students struggle with the transition from studying in their home country to studying in the UK, we have developed a specific unit called Academic Skills Training. Sessions cover anything from referencing and how to format an assignment, to how to come across professionally in PowerPoint presentations. All international students are automatically registered on the unit, so make sure you make the most of your opportunities for support!

Disability support

Our disability support team can assist you if you are affected by a disability, a long-term medical condition, or a specific learning disability.

Student Engagement and Mitigation Team (SEAM)

Our advisers provide confidential and impartial advice on academic, personal and health issues, and can support you if you have extenuating circumstances throughout your studies.

Personal Academic Tutors

Every student is allocated a personal academic tutor (PAT) to support them with their studies. This is in addition to your tutors at unit and course level.

Academic achievement support

Our libraries offer training in developing students' academic skills; improving assignment writing; resource searches and referencing; and IT skills.

Enhancing your career

The University's Careers and Employability Service will unlock your potential and enable you to manage your future career by providing you with professional, high-quality information, advice and guidance including:

- Specialist employability advisers
- Access to a wealth of careers information and resources online
- Help with securing internships, part-time jobs and volunteering opportunities
- Employment-related events, competitions and careers fairs
- Coaching on CV writing, interview skills and assessment centres

WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT you every step of the way...

International Office

We have a dedicated International Office based at our Luton campus, which offers support to all of our international students, across all of our campuses.

Student Information Desk (SiD)

Located on every campus, our Student Information Desks act as your gateway to all student services at Bedfordshire. You can also access SiD online 24/7 to view, update and log enquiries, or search our FAQ's at beds.ac.uk/sid

Mental health

We offer personal support to students experiencing mental health difficulties, as well as support for students returning to study after a period of illness.

Counselling service

We provide professional, confidential counselling for students experiencing problems of a personal or emotional nature that may be interfering with their academic work and life.



Student money advice

Our money advice team are available to provide you with general advice on budgeting, and direct you to alternative sources of funding that may be available.

Community and faith

All students are welcome to join our exciting programme of activities or access our confidential, personal and spiritual support - whether you are a person of faith or not.

MORE than a degree...

It's a competitive world out there; that's why we offer a wide range of events and activities to enable you to develop key skills and experiences that will help you to stand out from the crowd and differentiate you from other graduates.

Meet like-minded people

Clubs and societies are a great way to meet like-minded people, and get involved in a range of fun and exciting activities - and maybe even try something new!

At the University of Bedfordshire we have a wide range of faith, academic, cultural and recreational societies for you to get involved in. And if sport is more your thing we have a wide range of sports teams competing in the British University and Colleges Sports (BUCS) leagues.

Become a course representative

As a Course or Faculty Representative you'll act as the voice for your fellow students, and help to raise and solve any issues on behalf of your classmates. As a Student Representative you'll receive full training from the Students' Union.

Enhance your employability

We offer a range of employability units which you can study alongside your degree to further enhance your career prospects, and develop transferable skills which you can use in the work place. Build your confidence with our public speaking unit, or discover the skills needed to become a freelancer. You could also learn a new language, or gain the skills needed to become an entrepreneur, and much more.

Take over the airwaves

Radio LaB is the University's very own community radio station, broadcasting throughout Luton and Bedfordshire. You can get involved in presenting and producing your own shows on a subject that interests you.

Listen online at: radiolab.beds.ac.uk

Get Active

If you're interested in sport, but don't want to compete, our Get Active programme is for you. Our gyms in Luton and Bedford are FREE to use for all staff and students for the 2024 academic year. That means you can use our gyms, take part in our free Get Active fitness classes and get advice from our gym staff all without charge.

For more information, and to find out what else is available at the University of Bedfordshire, visit: beds.ac.uk/morethanadegree

BE entertained...

With the help of our Students' Union (Beds SU) we have lots of exciting things going on in and around our campuses to make your experience at Bedfordshire a great one.

Beds SU offers all students a range of activities and events to suit our diverse student community, ensuring students have the opportunity to meet like-minded others or experience new activities and interests. From day-time social and speaker sessions to themed nights in one of our venues, and nights out in the local town, to activities hosted by one of our many clubs and societies, as well as a host of virtual and on-demand events that ensure wherever you are based you can get involved, there really is something for everyone.

Metro Bar and Kitchen, Luton campus

By day the Metro Bar and Kitchen proudly serves Starbucks coffee along with a range of other beverages, sandwiches, paninis and snacks. It's a great space for socialising with friends, catching up on some course work or taking a well-deserved lunch break with a game of table tennis. By night the venue becomes the place to be with events such as quizzes and various themed club nights. Try our delicious range of food, from great 'Grab and Go' options to freshly made pizzas served throughout the day.

The Hub, Bedford campus

The Hub is the place to go to take a break, play a little pool and socialise with your friends. In the evening the venue opens its doors to host a range of events including club nights, quizzes and comedy nights. Freshly made pizzas are also available every evening during the week.



Welcome week

During Welcome Week Beds SU aims to help you settle in to university life, by making you aware of what Beds SU, the University, and the local area has to offer.

For full details on the activities and events taking place during your first few weeks at the University visit: bedssu.co.uk

Societies

On top of all the activities and events offered directly by Beds SU, we also have a diverse range of student-led societies that organise a whole host of activities and events. Why not get involved by joining a society, or even setting up one of your own.

YOUR student visa...

Under the Student route of the points-based immigration system, the University acts as your academic sponsor. This means we are saying to the UK Government that we believe you are a responsible student and are capable of completing the degree in your CAS letter at the University. You have been granted a visa to study specifically at the University of Bedfordshire. Throughout your studies, both you and the university need to comply with Home Office rules relating to international students.

For more detailed guidance, you can visit our website: unibeds.info/visaguidance

Registration

You must enrol within the enrolment period and show all requested documents. You must provide the International Office with any new passport or visa obtained after registration.

Digital Immigration Status (eVisa)

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) is developing an all-digital immigration system. They are replacing physical documents with an online record of your immigration status. To do this, you will need to create a UKVI account to access your eVisa and share information about your immigration status and conditions using the view and prove service.

For more information, please visit the [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk) website.

Corrections

You can contact our Visa and Immigration Advisory service in the International Office if you find a mistake on your BRP or visa, including length of time given at the end of your course.

Change of contact details

Your contact details must be correct and up to date at all times. These are your home and contact address in the UK (which should be near the campus where you are studying), your University and personal email addresses, and mobile phone number. You can update these at the Student Information Desk (SID) or via E-vision.

Engaging with your studies and attendance

Regular attendance is essential for all classes, and you must swipe your student ID card to register your attendance. Both in-person and online engagement are monitored, and the University is obligated to keep attendance records. Failure to engage may lead to the withdrawal of visa sponsorship. If you live over an hour away, an interview will be conducted to discuss your attendance plan.

Submissions

You must attend all exams and submit all work on time and in the right way. If you do not, this is a non-submission and it may mean you cannot apply for a visa extension. If you know that you cannot submit on time talk to your School and seek advice from Mitigating Circumstances before the submission date.

Failed units

The failure of one or more units can sometimes cause a gap in your studies. If you have a gap of more than 60 days of term-time you will need to return to your home country and apply for a

new visa to return and complete your course at a later date. You should seek advice from the International Office. The failure of one or more units may also mean you do not achieve your final award in time to apply for the Graduate Route visa.

Extending your visa

If you think you may require a visa extension, speak to a member of the Visa and Immigration Advisory Team at the International Office as soon as you find out about your re-sit or retake unit so that you can discuss your visa options well in advance. They will review your academic and visa situation and advise you of any immigration rules that may affect you.

Travel and absence during term-time

If you need to travel outside the UK during term-time or will be in the UK but absent from your studies, you must seek permission from the International Office. Absence and travel will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. You will need to provide evidence and confirm that you will return on an agreed date. This is because you may be missing lectures and other expected points of academic contact at the University. If you travel overseas it may be difficult for you to return to the UK. Immigration officers may wish to see proof that you have been given permission to travel and to return to the UK by the University, and if they are not satisfied with the proof you provide, they may refuse or delay your entry to the UK. This will result in you missing even more of the course than you or the University expected.

Working in the UK

As a student on a Student visa studying at NQF level 6 and above (Bachelor's degree or higher), you may work up to 20 hours per week during term time. If your course is at NQF level 3-5 (such as on an International Foundation Course or Pre-session English programme), you may work up to 10 hours per week during term time. You must ensure your visa has the correct work entitlement on it. If this is incorrect you should get it corrected before you start working. Whatever your level of study, you may work unlimited hours during official University holiday periods, after you have been awarded your degree, and when you have completed your studies and are awaiting your results. If you are undertaking retakes or referrals, or are writing up your dissertation, you must not work more than 20 hours per week. These periods are not holiday periods. For confirmation of your holiday dates, please speak to SiD who can issue you with a letter for your employer, if necessary. Working more hours than you are permitted will result in you being reported to UK Visas and Immigration as breaching the conditions of your leave to remain, and you will have your visa sponsorship withdrawn by the University. This will negatively affect your immigration record, which will affect any future visa applications you submit to the UKVI as well as your University registration.

Luton campus

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University of
Bedfordshire

