



# Applying to UK Universities

A guide for students in China and their families 2022

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## **Application Timeline**

### **Your Application**

- Checklist: How far have you got? 5
- What is happening to your application? 6
- Offers – First and second choices 7
- How long do I have to reply? 7
- Results day 7
- What to do if you miss your grades for both offers 8

### **Preparing for life in the UK - Practicalities**

- Student visas 9
- What to bring 10
- Money: An interview with Parents 11
- Visa Card Benefits 13
- Additional benefits 13
- Four steps to paying tuition fees by card 14
- Choosing a place to live 15

### **Preparing for life in the UK - Mindset**

- Preparing for life in the UK: Studying 16
- Living independently 17
- Making the most of your time 18
- Travel and volunteering 19
- Make your own bucketlist 20

### **Preparing for life in the UK - Practicalities AND Mindset**

- Part-time work, internships and careers 23
- What if things go wrong? 24
- Help with study 25
- Day 1 in the UK 26
- Chinese organisations in Britain 27

## **COVID**

### **Further information**

# Your Application: a Timeline

- Good questions to ask yourself and people you meet
- Actions you take
- Actions your school may take
- Actions universities or UCAS might take

## 4 YEARS OUT

What subjects do I really like?

Enjoy school and try lots of hobbies and extra-curricular activities.

General careers education and life skills.

Read, read, read! Listen to talks. Seek intellectual challenges.

How do my hobbies align with the subjects I like best and do well in?

Start thinking about your possible career. Why do you like it? How can you get there?

If I know which career I want to pursue, will this affect my subject choices in G11/Y12?

Study, study, study!  
(Remember to enjoy it!)

Start your personal research into courses and universities.

What subjects really suit me and will help me succeed and be happy in the world of work? What do I already know about what I want to do as a career?

Consider taking a well-regarded profile assessment such as Morrisby.

University fairs and support and advice with choices.

Who will my support network be as I apply?

Take an English language test.

Seek internships, voluntary work and other activities over the summer that may help give you insight into your future university course.

Read, read read!

Make a preliminary shortlist of courses and universities.

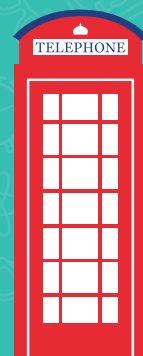
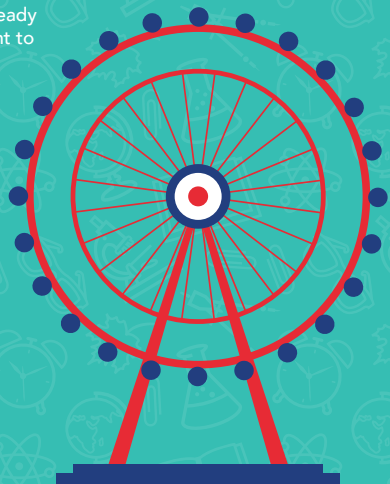
Complete a rough first draft of your personal statement.



## START OF G11/Y12

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Talk to your family about the initial plan and a budget. Suggest them to apply for a bank card such as Visa which will help you enjoy card benefits during the journey of application.



**SUMMER BEFORE  
G12/Y13**

Read, read read!



Get some work experience, and work on any troublesome subject areas.

Does the way I see my strengths match the way people who know me best see them? Or my school report?

**G12/Y13**

Review and advise on your personal statement (PS) draft and course choices. Oxbridge/G5 applicants identified.

Study, study, study! (Remember to enjoy it!)

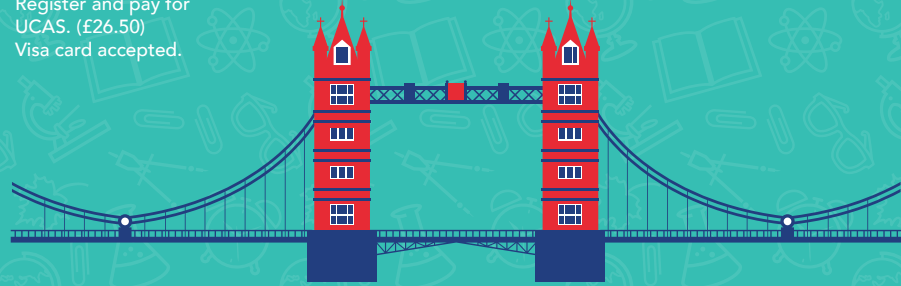
**VISA**

Retake English language tests if necessary.

Register and pay for UCAS. (£26.50) Visa card accepted.

School shares UCAS buzzword with applicants.

Make a checklist of extra requirements for the courses on your shortlist.



Mock exams and predicted grades.

Do my grades match the offer expectations of the courses on my shortlist?

Register for extra requirement exams.

Schools submit references and predicted grades for Oxbridge candidates.

Oxbridge candidates complete final draft of PS, write SAQ (if required) and complete UCAS applications.



Read, read read!

All remaining candidates complete final draft of PS and complete UCAS applications.

Complete extra requirement exams.

Am I getting enough sleep and exercise?

Offers may start to come in for early applicants.

Shortlisted candidates called for Oxbridge interviews.



Schools submit references and predicted grades for all remaining candidates.

Financial education and life-skills.

Decisions and offers come in via UCAS portal for all applicants.

Choose a first and insurance offer and accept via your UCAS portal. Note: You may need to pay for a deposit fee to secure your offer. (Visa card accepted)

Are there any work options that will give me useful experience or help me save money?

**SUMMER**

On results day accept your university place on UCAS. If you have not met either of your offers, go into clearing to find an alternative course

**VISA**

Study, study, study! (Remember to enjoy it!)



Work experience, volunteering, spending quality time with your family.

Does my university run early contact schemes or social media platforms to meet other students?

Do I know how to cook, budget and use a washing machine?

Work out a timeline for UK student visa applications and flights for travel to the UK. Consider travel insurance, flights, local transportation and easy methods of payment such as a Visa card.

**VISA**

# Checklist: What do you need for your application to a UK university?

## All Chinese applications require the following:

	Completed
Your <b>UCAS registration</b> and fee	
Your <b>UCAS form completed online</b> before the January deadline at <a href="http://www.ucas.com">www.ucas.com</a> which will include your choice of 5 selected courses in 5 universities	
Your <b>Personal Statement</b> (Prepare this most carefully as your offers will be based on this as well as your grades)	
Your <b>IELTS Grade</b> (Do the test in good time as failure to reach the IELTS standard will mean you are refused for your course)	
Your <b>Exam Grades and/or Predicted Grades</b> from your school exams (which your teachers have to provide when you submit your application)	
Your <b>School Reference</b> (which your teachers have to provide when you submit your application)	
<b>Financial Details</b> for future payment of your course	

## Some applications have **extra** requirements which will be specific to your course and to the different universities to which you are applying

Check whether you will need to:

	Required for me	Completed
<b>be aware of earlier application dates</b> in October for subjects such as Medicine, Veterinary Studies and all subjects at Oxford or Cambridge		
have an <b>interview</b> , usually online		
complete subject-specific <b>testing</b>		
submit a <b>portfolio</b> of work for arts subjects		
complete an <b>additional essay</b> after application		
send <b>transcripts</b> detailing your grades so far		
fill in an <b>equality of access form</b> , such as SAQ, for a particular university		
provide information regarding <b>Special Educational Needs</b>		

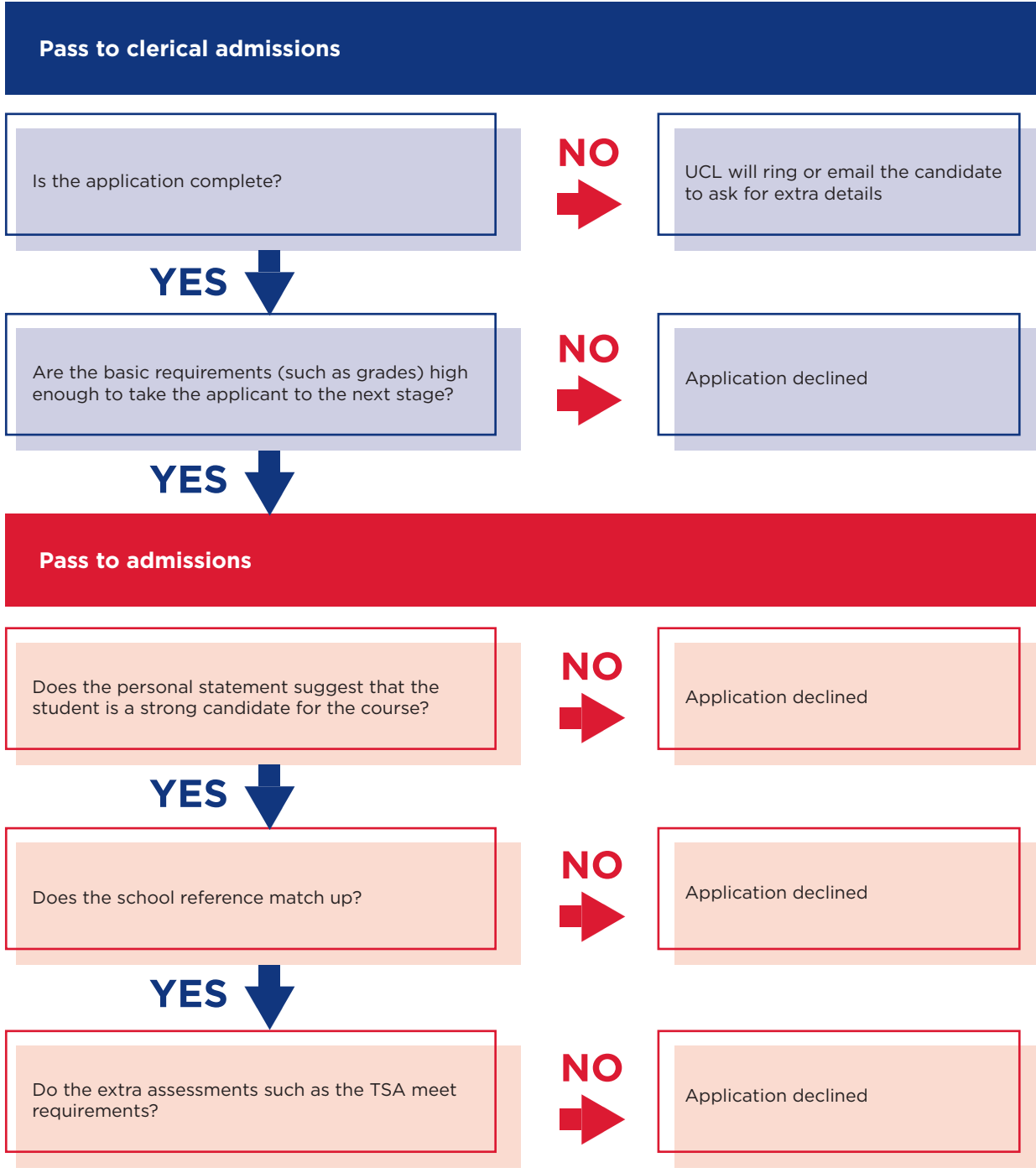
Universities provide information on the course pages of their websites about their extra requirements and they will contact you if you have to prepare for an interview, send extra work or complete extra forms.

Because of the upheaval of the pandemic and the disruption of school exams more universities are now contacting students with requests to see examples of their school work so that they can make fair decisions on offers so be prepared for this!

# What is happening to your application?

You should be pretty clear at this point about what your part in your application has been, but what's been happening behind the scenes once you've pressed 'submit' on your UCAS application? As you wait for all 5 offers to be sent to your UCAS account, here is an example of the protocol for admissions at one UK university - UCL.

## How do universities process their applications?

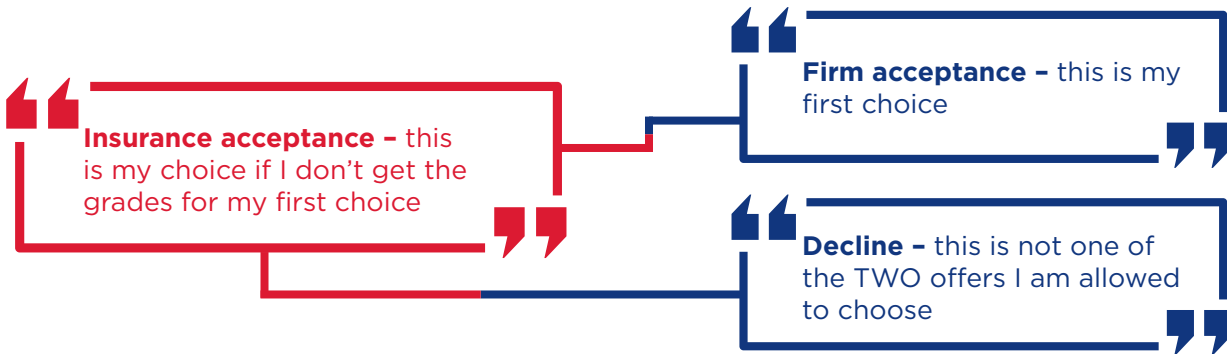


**Conditional or unconditional offer sent (conditional is FAR more common)**

No firm offers will be made until the final UCAS deadline has passed, to ensure that they give equal weight to the whole cohort. Even though some universities run a rolling admissions process, as long as you make the final deadline, your application will be given the same weight regardless of when it is received.

## Offers – First and second choices

Once you have heard back from all the universities you applied to, it's time to reply via your application portal.



- If your firm choice is an unconditional offer, this is the only offer you can take up.
- Your insurance choice has to have lower offer conditions than your firm choice. If, once your results come in, you have met the conditions for your firm choice, then you can't take up the insurance offer, even if you would like to.
- Once you have accepted one offer firmly and another one as an insurance offer your other course choices become void and you will need to decline them.
- You now have to wait until your exam results come out to see whether you have achieved your offer.
- If you still do not have the right level of IELTS you should do that before your results come out and let your universities know you have the right grade.
- If you haven't received any offers or if you decide you don't want to take up any of the offers, you can withdraw your application and have a look at UCAS's Extra or Clearing services where alternative courses are. UCAS Extra, UCAS Clearing and Clearing Plus are great tools that are often underused for students whose applications haven't run quite as expected. To find out more about them, check the detailed pages on the UCAS website here: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/extra-choices> ; <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing>
- After confirming your choices, you have up to 14 days to contact UCAS if you change your mind about your choices.

## How long do I have to reply?

This will depend on when the last decision came in for you so check your application to see what your personal deadline is.

If you receive your last decision on or before **19 May 2022**, your reply date is **9 June 2022** (except if you're using Extra to find a place). If you receive your last decision on or before **14 July 2022**, your reply date is **21 July 2022** (including Extra choices).

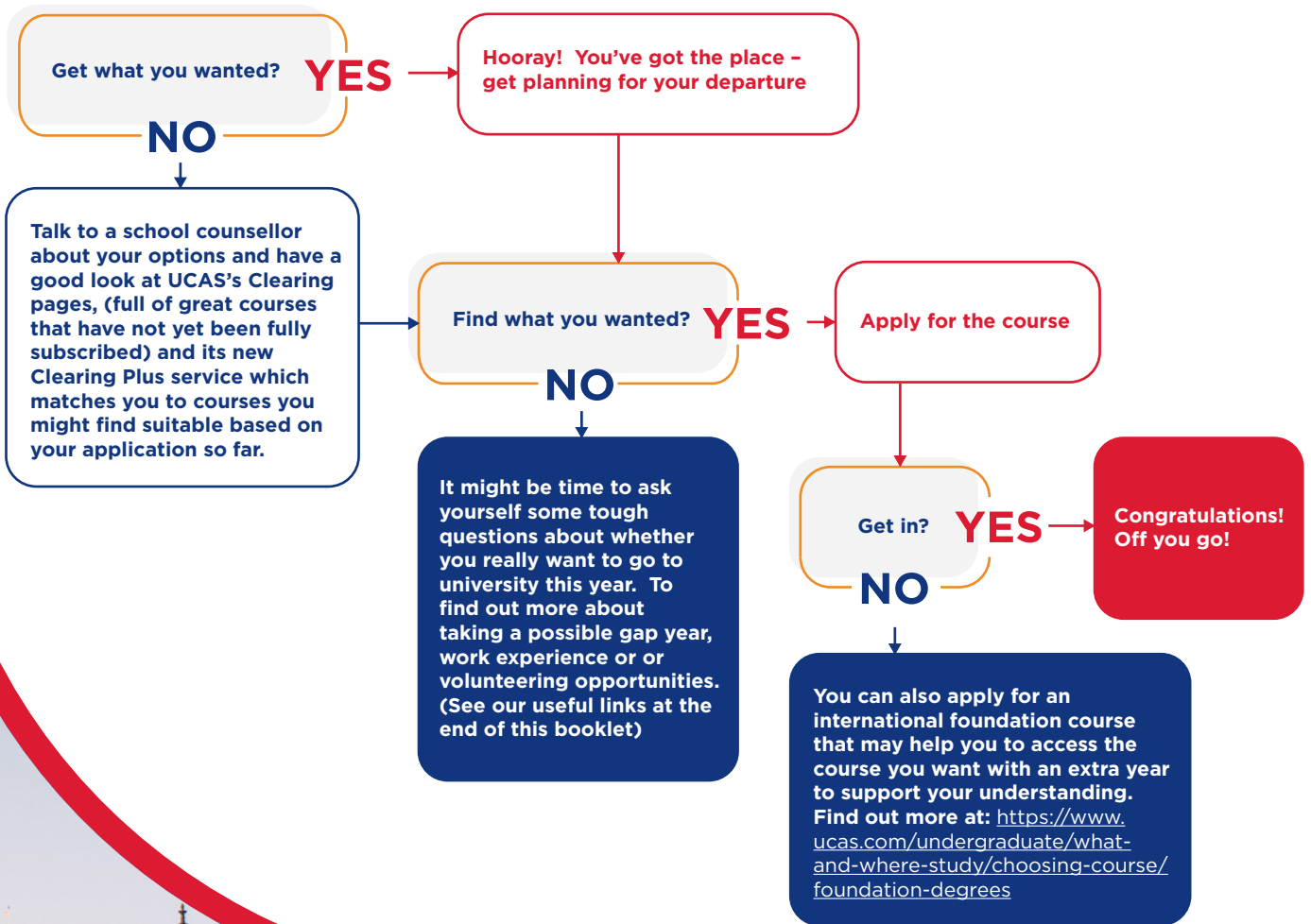
## Results day



- When your results come out they will be sent by your school to UCAS and the universities will accept or reject you. You then have to confirm that you are accepting your place at university via UCAS.
- If you do not reach your firm offer you will automatically be accepted by your safety choice unless you have not reached their offer either.
- Note that UCAS's adjustment service, for students who do better than their predicted grades is no longer running as of 2022, though Clearing and Clearing Plus remain good options.

## What to do if you miss your grades for both offers

Make contact with both universities and see if either will consider taking you anyway. Phoning or emailing admissions directly is the best approach. It's very helpful if you tell them as soon as you can if your school is querying any of your grades or requesting remarks.





## Preparing for life in the UK

As you start to gear up for leaving, you will need to make sure you are on top of the practicalities as well as working on the mindset you will need to make the most of the amazing opportunities and experiences you are about to have access to. So let's start with the practicalities:

### Student visas

Once you have accepted your place at a UK university you will need to apply for a student visa to the UK. The student visa has replaced what used to be known as the Tier 4 visa as the most common visa type for overseas students, so don't be confused if you see references to the old name.

The visa application in itself is not especially tricky but it is a bit of a balancing act - several things need to be ready at once so it is **very important** that you plan ahead, read the current instructions and make sure you have a clear sense of when you will be ready to apply.

#### The balancing act:

##### Plate 1:

If you're applying from China, the earliest you can apply for a visa is 6 months before you start your course. You'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks of applying but it's worth allotting twice this much if you can just in case of unexpected delays (particularly as the pandemic continues).

##### Plate 2:

You cannot apply for a visa until you have an unconditional offer of a place from the university you have definitely chosen to go to. Since most prospective undergraduates have conditional offers, this means you will probably need to have got your exam results before you can complete your application. As soon as you have confirmed with your university that you are accepting the place, they should send you something called a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) which you will need to complete your application.

##### Plate 3:

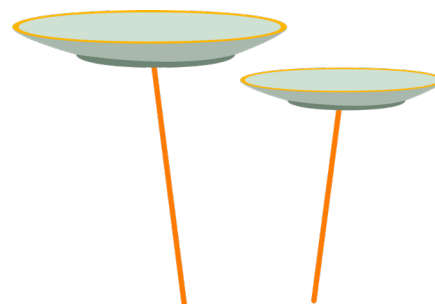
You will also need to prove you have access to enough money in the UK to support yourself and pay your tuition fees for the year at least a month **before** you apply for your visa. The money for tuition fees will be outlined by your university on the CAS (see plate 2). The living expenses minimum is currently set at:

- £1,334 per month (for up to 9 months) for courses in London
- £1,023 per month (for up to 9 months) for courses outside London

To keep all these plates spinning together, the golden rule is to make sure you apply early. You may not be able to complete the process before you get your exam results, but you can get well ahead by lining everything else up. For example, make sure you have certification for all extra university requirements (for example English language tests); make sure you have an up-to-date passport with an expiry date which is not going to cause you problems (anecdotally, this process seems to have become a little longer than in previous years due to pandemic restrictions so be prepared!)

You will find all of the information you need here: <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/apply>

The website is very clearly laid out and written but it is really worth reading together as a family to make sure you all have a clear sense of what you need to do and when. Remember also to check the COVID requirements regularly to make sure that things don't change and add even more plates to the process!



## What to bring

UK has all that you will need! Many students overpack before they arrive, but really you just need to bring your suitcase of clothes and any books you want to have with you.

It will be easy to find and buy bedding and kitchen utensils and it will not take long to find out where the nearest Chinese supermarket is! Most universities hold markets for essentials, stationery and things with which you can decorate your room in the first weeks of term. Do bring all the documentation for your studies and accommodation and your phone with WeChat downloaded - it will stay activated even when you change to a UK SIM card.

## Bring



Clothes suitable for the temperature



Course books that were cheaper to get in China before you arrive (most textbooks are available second-hand in campus sales though)



Wet weather gear - a decent raincoat and lightweight



Toiletries you like



Photos and knick-knacks to remind you of home



Photocopies of your documents

## Don't bring



Bedding



More clothes than Lewis Hamilton would find a bit excessive



Really expensive items that will distress you to lose or damage



Lots of food or kitchen utensils



Furniture

## Money: An interview with Parents

### What are the specific costs of studying in the UK? (Tuition fees, rent, other?)

A: The cost of studying in the UK varies from city to city. My experience is based on having my child studying in London, so let's take London as an example. London is a very colourful place to live, so the daily expenses of international students will be relatively high. However, if you are going to study in London, you should try to experience as much of the foreign culture as possible and integrate into local life as much as you can. Not every extra expense is a waste when you're a student!

There are several types of expenses that you will incur when studying and living in London.

**(1) Tuition fees & rent:** This is the biggest expense for international students. Parents can either pay by credit card at home or let their children pay locally when they arrive in the UK.

**(2) Daily necessities:** For transport, London's underground system is expensive, at least £7 per day, (c.RMB 58). There is a bigger range for food: cooking for yourself is the most economical, takeaway is convenient but slightly more expensive than at home, dine-in at restaurants is the most expensive. Household goods (daily necessities, clothing, shoes and hats, electronic equipment, etc.) are available at similar costs to what you would find in China.

**(3) Study, leisure and entertainment:** Students will need money for books (paper books are more expensive in the UK but with more second hand options), but also films, theatre, concerts, art museums, fitness, etc.

**(4) Holiday travel:** When students get to public holidays, such as reading week, Christmas, spring break, etc., they can take the train to other parts of the country, such as Oxbridge, York, Bath, and even beyond, to Edinburgh for a taste of Scotland or a short trip with friends to other European countries such as France, Germany or Italy.

### What costs do I need to pay in advance at home? And how? (Are US\$ appropriate?)

A: Usually the IELTS exam fees, tuition fees and rent are paid in-country and it is very easy to pay directly by credit card. Here I would like to share with you my own experience of paying tuition fees in particular, which may be helpful to parents.

I often hear parents ask: what is the most convenient and secure way to pay for school fees? My own experience has been clear: a credit card! This is because paying tuition fees by credit card is really fast, secure and economical.

Here are the two main benefits of paying tuition fees by credit card.

**(1) Fast, real-time payment:** There are no delays in bank transfers, as tuition fees are paid by credit card in real time to the school's designated account, and you will usually receive an email and receipt from the school by the second or third day.

**(2) Secure, full payment:** This is also important. In the case of bank transfers, the money is usually transferred to the university's designated account through a local transfer bank in the UK, but this process can result in delays and fees being charged by the transfer bank. For example, if a parent sends £7,000 by bank transfer, the school may only receive £6,800, with a fee of £200 being taken by the intermediate bank. However, this is not a problem when paying tuition fees by credit card and the full amount will be paid.

I myself use a Visa credit card from China Merchants Bank, but other credit cards issued by other banks in China can also be used to pay tuition fees. For example, Bank of China's Visa Credit Card for International Students, ICBC, Construction Bank and Agricultural Bank all have such products.

## **What kind of typical payment problems will students encounter after arriving in the UK? Could you share any advice?**

A: Personally, my family hasn't experienced any problems with paying by card in the UK, as everyday payments are card-based. Although I occasionally encountered some small online/offline merchants that did not accept domestic credit cards, the larger supermarkets and shopping malls were generally fine.

I think probably the biggest challenge with using cards abroad is the issue of payment security. Before your child goes abroad, he or she should know and understand the basics of using a bank card in advance and be aware of the risks, especially knowing how to protect personal information. For example, when purchasing online, we are often asked to provide the three numbers on the back of our credit card, which is known by the technical term "CVV2", or 3D-Secure, a service invented by Visa in the early years to verify the identity of the cardholder. In this way it is possible to confirm that the transaction has been made by the cardholder himself and is secure. Therefore, the three numbers on the back of this card must not be revealed to anyone else at any time, and if this information is compromised, the card can be stolen.

## **What should I do if I discover that my card has been stolen or lost?**

Firstly, you should call your card issuer immediately, freeze the card and ask them to replace it with a new one immediately. If your child does not have a replacement card or cash on hand, you can call your local Visa Global Customer Support Service (GCAS) in the UK through your home bank to request a temporary card, which will be issued to the cardholder as a matter of urgency and delivered to the cardholder within 1-3 working days, depending on the amount approved by the issuer.

Of course, the best way is to have two bank cards for your child, a Visa credit card issued by a domestic bank (for ease of use, this must be a chip card, since UK merchants basically only accept chip cards) and a debit card from a local bank in the UK as a tool for daily purchases. That way, you can alternate between the two cards and have some cash with you.

## **What were the biggest difficulties you encountered in the payment-related process? How was it resolved?**

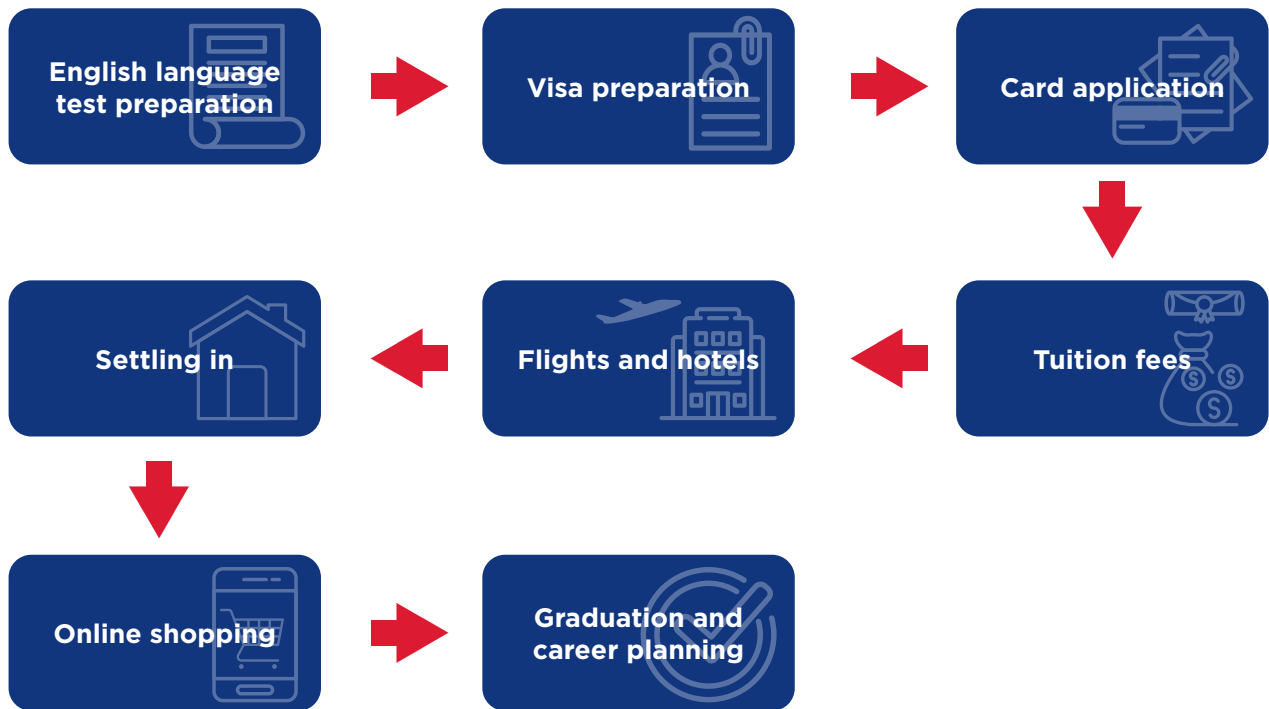
A: One of the most difficult times I have encountered myself was paying my children's rent. Because domestic card issuers are super risk-aware, they have strict controls over authorisation and limits for transactions with some unknown UK real estate agents or housing rental agents. Therefore, it was difficult to pay the rent in one go with one card. I have since used several credit cards from different banks to pay, each with transactions of around £2,000, and have finally managed to swipe through.

## **What advice do you have for families applying to the UK this year?**

A: The academic side of studying in the UK is not a problem for any of the students, so I won't go into it here. In terms of living, apart from the above-mentioned common sense of daily payments and developing a sense of risk, it is also best to find a flat (such as a student flat) in advance in your home country, as there are more and more international students going to study in the UK now and housing seems to be getting tighter and more difficult to secure than it was before. If you are new to the UK, you may want to consider living in university halls or finding a flatmate to share for the first year, as this will help to eliminate the feeling of isolation, especially as the transition period is not easy when you first arrive in the UK. Finally, I wish all students the best in enjoying your time abroad, making progress in your studies and having a bright future! I believe that this period of study abroad will be one of the most memorable experiences in life!

## Visa Card Benefits

Visa offers fast, secure and easy-to use support for every step of your child's adventure abroad.



## Additional benefits

Visa also provides access to great partnerships, benefits and discounts with companies worldwide including:

- Partnerships with well-known Chinese student agencies
- Overseas lounge
- Insurance
- International sim card
- Dining/transportation/online shopping loyalty cards
- Health care
- Graduate/career planning



**VISA**

## Four steps to paying tuition fees by card

University fees in the UK are usually paid in three instalments over the course of the year, with a third of the total amount paid each time.

Assuming you have a Visa card and you intend to use it to pay your tuition fees, you will need to complete the following steps.

**1**

First check how much credit/balance you currently have on your card.

**2**

If the limit is not enough, you immediately call the customer service of the issuing bank and tell them that you need to pay your child's school fees and ask them to increase your temporary limit (usually the temporary limit is valid for one month, after which it automatically reverts to the original limit).

**3**

Go to the payment link for the school fees and select 'Pay by Visa Card'.

**4**

Enter the payment amount and a pop-up window will appear asking you to enter a one-time password, which you will then receive on your mobile phone, enter this one-time password in the pop-up window on your computer and click Pay. Once the payment is complete, the page will show the words 'Payment Successful'.



## Choosing a place to live

Although some people choose to share a flat, we recommend that you get a place in university halls especially for your first year. This will allow you to make friends quickly, and give you a community with whom you can work things out together.

Some halls provide meals and others do not. All will have areas where you can wash your clothes and make meals. Often there is a communal social area too.

Your university will ask you about accommodation as soon as you accept your place and this can all be organised before you leave for the UK.

Many universities also have services to collect international students from the airport and offer orientation weeks which you should definitely attend!

If for any reason you do not like your accommodation once you arrive you should go to the university housing department and ask to change as soon as possible.

Later in the second year and third years, once you know the area and have made a group of friends, students often opt to rent a house or an apartment together. The university housing office can help you with your search and with any problems that may arise.



## Preparing for life in the UK: Studying

So now you have grasped the practicalities, it's time to think about mindset.

This year, the most important thing you can do to prepare for university, is to study hard, read and think a lot, and enjoy your studies. As offers (hopefully) start rolling in, it can be easy to start thinking of your current studies as a series of hoops to jump through. Of course getting the grades is important! But the reality is that the happiness and success of your future is much more dependent on the habits you are developing now to actually engage with your learning and be a good student than any single grade or even particular university you have in mind. The best time to make any adjustments is while you still have the everyday support of your family, teachers and established friendship groups.

Take a few minutes to think about the questions below and consider how 'university ready' your current study habits are:

**YES**

Am I enjoying my studies?

**NO**

**YES**

Am I reading around my subjects? Listening to podcasts? Reading articles and magazines that go beyond the specifications?

**NO**

**YES**

Do I have the confidence and skills to make a start on an academic task even when I don't yet fully understand it, or when all the steps have not been laid out for me?

**NO**

**YES**

Do I know the difference between being stuck and procrastinating?

**NO**

**YES**

Do I know how to ask for help effectively when I am stuck?

**NO**

**YES**

Can I ask 'challenge' questions in class?

**NO**

**YES**

Can I work well with peers who are not friends when preparing group work/presentations?

**NO**

**YES**

Can I complete all my assignments on time without being reminded by teachers?

**NO**

**YES**

Do I know whether I am on track with my current subjects and grades without relying on my teachers to tell me?

**NO**

**YES**

Can I make, organise and review my own notes without being given a structure by my teachers?

**NO**

**YES**

Do I manage my own sleep habits well?

**NO**

**YES**

Have I made enough time for exercise, friends and a balanced life beyond a computer screen this year?

**NO**

**YES**

Do I know when and how to stop when it comes to things I find compelling?

**NO**

We all have these - for some it might be phone games, for others, nights out or the infinite scroll or social media, for others Netflix box-sets - admit it, you know what your own thing is.

If the answer to any of these questions is 'no', you have time to fix it! For many, now is a much better time to address it, with the support of family, teachers and friends around you, than once you arrive at university. Pick one thing to work on at a time, tell your supporters what you are trying, and you will be amazed at the difference it makes by the end of the year.



## Living independently

For many students, this is also the first time you will be living away from home. We hope the list of questions below are things you can answer 'of course I can!' to by now. If not, you have a little time to correct them.

YES

Do I know how to use a washing machine?

NO

YES

Can I cook more than 4 dishes?

NO

YES

Have I worked out a budget per term, week and day?

NO

YES

Have I photocopied my important documents and given copies to people I know?

NO

YES

Have I got a back-up plan that doesn't involve calling my family if I lose my keys?

NO

YES

Have I got a record of important phone numbers and contacts in case I lose my phone?

NO

YES

Can I do basic household chores?

NO

YES

Can I work out how to get from one place to another without the magic of Didi?

NO

YES

Do I know how to plan my free time so that I don't spend all of my weekends at home?

NO

YES

Can I set and stick to regular hours and a schedule?

NO

YES

Can I ride a bicycle?

NO

YES

Can I plan travel and trips for fun?

NO

YES

Do I know what to do if someone is bothering me, steals something from me or makes me feel unsafe?

NO

YES

Can I set up a social exchange with someone I think I could be friends with?

NO



## Making the most of your time

If you choose your course carefully and work hard, it's most likely that you will leave the UK with a good degree. But what else will you be leaving with? This is your opportunity to study, yes, but it is also your opportunity to grow in many other ways and have experiences and try things out that you have never had the chance to do before. It's where you make life-long friends and where you build your confidence in your future.

**Make sure you join clubs and societies.**

**Make sure that you try a new sport or hobby each year.**

**Make sure you take as many travel opportunities as you can.**

**Make sure you try your hand at leadership, fulfilling different roles in the societies you have joined.**

**Make sure you do one thing each term for other people, for example, by signing up with a charity or volunteer organisation.**

**Make sure, while studying hard, that you make time for fun!**



## Travel and volunteering

Ultimately, two of the greatest ways to really ensure you have a rich and meaningful time during your university years, are to do some travelling, and to do some volunteering. Both will connect you to people, ideas, challenges and experiences you may not have had before, and give you memories and horizon-broadening 'ah!' moments you will probably never forget.

There are a million places to seek advice and find opportunities, but we recommend:



### For volunteering

- **University careers offices:** Most university careers offices are both incredibly helpful and incredibly underused. They will often have great volunteering opportunities locally, and can connect you to a wealth of worthy and meaningful projects that can match to and make the most of your talents. We really recommend an early visit
- **Student RAG and STAR societies:** RAG stands for raising and giving and STAR stands for student action on refugees. You will find both in almost every university in the UK (though occasionally they will be named something different). A great many universities centre RAG activities around a specific RAG week, but watch out for both groups at the Freshers Fair and make sure you keep their contacts.
- **Do-it:** This UK volunteering search engine has a wealth of opportunities across the country in its searchable pages <https://doit.life/discover>



### For travel

- **Backpacker advice** – for information and tips for people backpacking all around the world, this website will offer tips and advice on almost everything you will need: [www.backpackeradvice.com](http://www.backpackeradvice.com)
- **UK government advice** – If you're planning a trip to other countries, the foreign office offers up to date and quite readable summaries on safety, health and the law: [www.gov.uk/guidance/gap-year-foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/gap-year-foreign-travel-advice)
- **Gap years:** For more extensive travel or volunteering opportunities and advice, the US based <https://www.gapyearassociation.org/> offers a range of information on taking a gap year

# Make your own bucketlist



free	Climb the tallest hill of the county you're in	Hike a public footpath	Visit a national park	Have an argument with someone about what is objectively the best flavour of crisps
	Wrap up in a coat, hat and scarf and go to a Bonfire Night	Go and see the Christmas lights being turned on in your local area	Listen to a pirate radio station	Watch the Queen's speech at Christmas
	Visit at least 5 London museums	Watch one episode each of Eastenders, Coronation Street, Hollyoaks, Emmerdale	Experience carol singing	Get a part time job in a bar, cafe or a restaurant
	Go to an event in your local library (the university one doesn't count - you should be there ALL the time)	Queue for something at a post office	Say sorry 35 times within the same day	Swim in open water
	Watch Prime Ministers Questions	Go and watch the changing of the guard and invent a story to explain it	Volunteer at a soup kitchen	Visit churches in at least 5 different places
	Listen to Evensong in a cathedral	Try skateboarding or rollerblading at a local park	Sign up to be in the audience of a Radio 4 programme	Go for a long walk in the rain
less than £15	Buy <b>The Guardian</b> , <b>The Telegraph</b> and <b>The Sun</b> and read them on the same day	Go and see some Roman ruins	Buy a copy of the Big Issue	Play board games in a pub
	Eat fish and chips by the coast	Go to an independently owned movie house	Take a night bus	Go to a Burns night
	Go to a country show	Go to a museum in your local town	Go to visit a famous garden	Take part in a park run
	Spend £10 in a charity shop	Eat a kebab after midnight	Bet £1 on the Grand National	Take a trip on a ferry
	Have a bacon sandwich for breakfast	Go to the magazine section in a supermarket and pick a random hobby	Taste 20 different chocolate bars (do not try this all on one day)	Take sandwiches to the park and have a picnic
	Go to a village fête	Go strawberry picking	Play darts in a pub	Buy and send a postcard
	Go for a curry somewhere someone's recommended to you	Visit a regimental museum	Collect one of each coin, and work out what the best value for money would be if you spent it	Go to a Wetherspoons pub at 11am
£15-£50	Go to a pub beer garden in the summer	Spend a day at the seaside (bonus points for bringing a cheap football and calling it a 10 bob swerver)	Go to see a live band you've never heard of	Have a barbecue in the rain
	Watch a game of tennis while drinking Pimms	Go to your local theatre	Eat food from every different continent in your university town	Take a steam train
	Try out three different modes of transport on UK rivers	Try out bingo	Take a trip on a funicular railway	Go for afternoon tea with a friend
	Go camping	Sign up for a nightclass	Try port and stilton	Go to a lower division football game
	Go to a cricket match	Crazy golf	Go and watch an outdoor theatre performance	Go and see some stand-up comedy
Go to a pantomime	Visit a battle-site or historical reenactment village	Sign up for a Secret Cinema event	Have a Sunday lunch in a country pub after a long walk	
£60+	Visit 5 National Trust buildings	Visit all 4 countries in the UK	Go and watch some greyhound racing	Go to a music festival

By now, you know you're going to the UK - time to think about how you will be making the most of your time there. Choose a selection of items from our list, add some things of your own, and make a list of ambitions you want to fulfil each year you will be living in the country.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
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# Start travelling before you leave with the British chambers of commerce in China

Community events at the British chambers of commerce help to connect a whole range of people in China with an interest in the UK



## BEIJING HIGHLAND GAMES

To join this event, and others like it in Beijing, please scan here:



## CHENGDU UK ALUMNI MIXER

To join this event, and others like it in South West, please scan here:



## GUANGZHOU BRITISH DAY

To join this event, and others like it in Guangdong, please scan here:

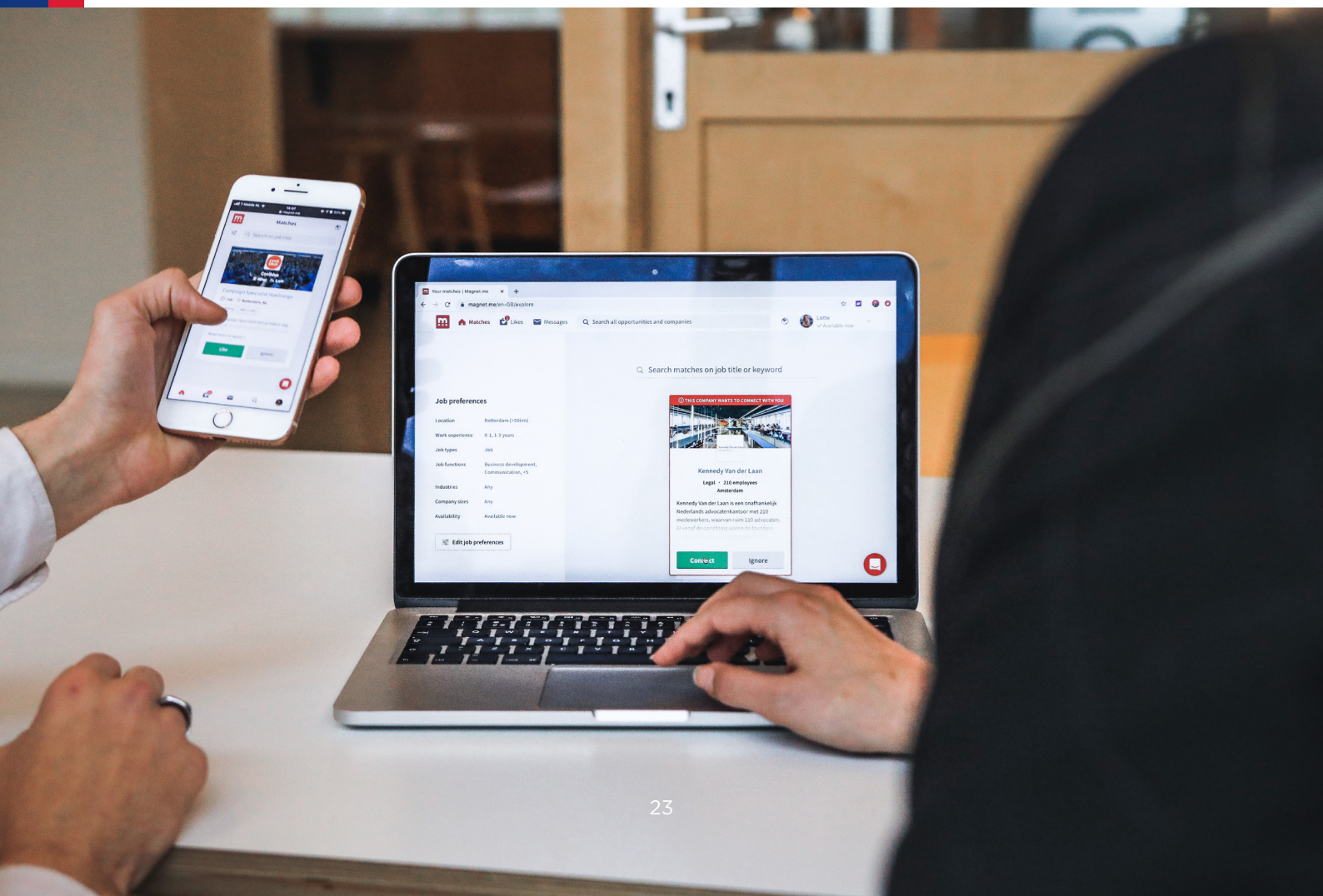


## Part-time work, internships and careers

Part time work can be a really useful way of supplementing your income, but also give you skills and experience that will contribute to your career path. It's worth taking some time to consider the opportunities for internships, work experience, both before you set off, and once you arrive at university. The more you find out about what's out there, the more possibilities you open up for your future!

First stop, as with volunteering, should be your university careers office, followed by a good look at university notice boards for part-time jobs locally, but we also recommend these sites to find out more:

- The Year in Industry programme; Paid placements for students [www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry](http://www.etrust.org.uk/the-year-in-industry)
- Entrepreneur handbook: Advice for all entrepreneurs in the UK [www.entrepreneurhandbook.co.uk](http://www.entrepreneurhandbook.co.uk)
- Shell livewire: Support and awards programme for young entrepreneurs <https://www.livewire.shell/>
- Videos of people talking about their career paths. [www.icould.com](http://www.icould.com) ; [www.Careersbox.co.uk](http://www.Careersbox.co.uk)
- Targetjobs: Information on a wide range of graduate careers. [www.Targetjobs.co.uk](http://www.Targetjobs.co.uk)
- [www.Prospects.ac.uk](http://www.Prospects.ac.uk) Information on graduate vacancies, post-graduate study and typical career destinations by subject studied.
- What color is your parachute? A practical manual for job-hunters and career changers. [www.jobhuntersbible.com](http://www.jobhuntersbible.com)



## What if things go wrong?

### Medical/ safety emergencies

The most important advice here is to plan ahead. The worst time to decide what you will do in an emergency is when you are actually experiencing it!

- Make sure you agree a muster point for those you are living with in case of fire in the first week of living together. Pretty much all buildings in the UK will have fire-safety instructions, so take the time to actually read them!
- Make sure to fill in and collect everything needed from your health insurance company, e.g. health insurance card.
- Have a medical emergency contact in the country and keep their contact details in your wallet.
- Find out the phone numbers for emergency services (police, ambulance, medical help, fire brigade etc.) – the emergency number across the UK is 999 for all of these!
- Find out the locations of hospitals, clinics, police stations near where you stay.
- Keep an emergency ‘go bag’ if possible (photo IDs, some cash, first aid kit, some amount of water & food, phone charger etc.)
- If you haven’t already done this, sign up to a first aid course when you get to university.

### Life advice and mental health support:

Everyone encounters times in their life when things get difficult. If this happens to you while you are at university, don’t suffer in silence! There are a huge number of agencies and organisations in the UK dedicated to helping people who find themselves stuck in any one of a thousand ways. Look out for the slew of leaflets and helpline stickers you will be given in your first weeks, and keep a little pile of them somewhere handy in case you or someone you know needs them later down the line. It’s also worth looking at your university’s website to see what specific help they offer – all universities have a duty of care towards their students, and the overwhelming majority of them take this very seriously and have provisions for support.





## Help with study

Your university website will provide guidance for your studies and will have lessons online or in person on study skills and academic writing. Make use of these!

Make use of any courses that are offered to perfect your English.

Think seriously about having your essays edited for English in your first year until your English is really good. It will take a lot of stress away whilst you establish yourself as a fluent English speaker.

Never be afraid of asking for guidance from your teachers. They will point you in the right direction and do their best to help you.

If you still feel you have difficulties in understanding the academic content of your course, you could also look for a graduate student in your subject and ask for some tutoring from them.

If you find yourself getting into problems in your studies contact your personal tutor and explain your problems to them. The teachers all want you to succeed and they will help you. Do not just sit alone and worry as they can only help you if they know you are facing difficulties.

If you are suffering from anxiety, depression or any mental health issues you should use the university counselling service which is free. They can also advise on exam anxiety and related study problems.

There is a system in place to ask for extra time for your assignments. Make sure you understand this and ask for extra time as soon as you can.

If for any reason you have a bad exam or do not go to it, still there will be the possibility of retaking an exam or resubmitting assessed work. However you must tell your tutors and you must reply to any emails they send you. I repeat, they want you to succeed but they need to know before all of the deadlines have passed!

If you do not pass your exams you will have the opportunity to re-sit individual exams in the summer or to re-do the year.

The only study problem that is hard to resolve is an accusation of plagiarism so make sure you read the university's guidelines on this as early as you can and take them very seriously.

Keep a reference list!! Especially if you're writing essays or research reports.

You are completely independent of your own study and DEADLINES, so make sure to plan ahead for your assignments. You'll encounter overlapping deadlines, so leaving everything till the last minute will create a world of usually unnecessary pain. Universities have very little tolerance in late submission unless you have asked for an extension.

Try to form study groups with peers in the same class or course, so that you can discuss about class content that you do not understand.

## Day 1 in the UK

# 1

Try to go early to the UK. You do not want to miss Freshers Week by being in quarantine! Freshers Week is very important. It is when you join all of your clubs and societies and meet as many people as possible as you get to know your new environment.

# 2

Many universities also have orientation weeks for international students and this can be very useful as you will be helped to understand all the things that are new and strange and meet other students who feel the same as you.

# 3

Join a Facebook or WeChat group or other people starting at your university before you go and try to connect with them before you arrive.

# 4

Your university may have an airport pick-up service so check with the international office.

# 5

When you arrive go to your accommodation and leave your bags. You will need to go to a big supermarket like Sainsbury or Tesco to find bedding and towels

# 6

Once you have your accommodation address and your student card you will be able to open a student account at the bank though it will take a few days to receive your payment card.

# 7

Go to a mobile phone network store like O2 as soon as you can and get a SIM card so that you are connected as soon as possible. You will need your bank details and address for this.

# 8

Spend the rest of the day looking around your university and the town. Do not be afraid to say hello to anyone else who looks new on your campus. Everyone will be looking to make friends!

# 9

Google 'Chinese Takeaways near me' and order a delivery for your first supper! Everything else can wait until tomorrow.

# 10

WeChat your family to tell them you are safe before you go to sleep, but watch out for the time difference!

## Chinese organisations in Britain

A great way to connect with Chinese communities in the UK, find Chinese-speaking services, and the best Chinese food and cultural events is to find your nearest Chinese community centre. The list below contains some of the groups with the most comprehensive websites, but is not exhaustive! Search for one near your university and there's a good chance you will find one.

Blackpool Chinese Community Association  
1A Poulton Gr, Fleetwood FY7 6  
+44 1253 872399

The British Chinese Network <https://e-voice.org.uk/bcn/>

Camden Chinese Community Centre  
<https://www.camdenccc.co.uk/>

Chinese Information and Advice Centre  
<https://ciac.co.uk/>

Chinese Community Centre Birmingham  
<https://chinesebirmingham.org.uk/>

Chinese Community Centre - One Westminster  
<https://www.onewestminster.org.uk/directory/10660>

Federation of Chinese Associations of Manchester  
1st Floor, 12 Newton Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2AN  
+44 161 655 3600

Hua Xin Chinese Society  
58 Queen Street, Morecambe LA4 5EP  
+44 7745 873200  
[www.chinesesociety.org.uk](http://www.chinesesociety.org.uk)

Leeds Chinese Community Association  
84-86 North Street, Leeds LS2 7PN  
+44 113 234 6019  
[www.lcca-uk.org](http://www.lcca-uk.org)

Leeds Chinese Women's Group  
The Compton Centre 322 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 7BG  
+44 113 336 7801

Liverpool Chinatown  
3-5 Nelson Street, Liverpool L1 5DN  
+44 845 915 4515  
[www.liverpoolchinatown.co.uk](http://www.liverpoolchinatown.co.uk)

Liverpool Chinese Business Association  
94 Seel Street, Liverpool L1 4BL  
+44 161 463 0586  
[www.lcba.net](http://www.lcba.net)

London Chinese Community Centre  
<https://www.ccc.org.uk/>

Wai Yin Chinese Women Society  
Woolwich House 61, Mosley St, Manchester M2 3HZ  
+44 161 237 5908  
[www.waiyin.org.uk](http://www.waiyin.org.uk)

Wah Sing Chinese Community Centre  
149 Duke St, Liverpool L1 4JR  
+44 151 709 9842

Wai Yin  
66-68 Swan Street, Manchester M4 5JU  
+44 161 833 0377 [www.waiyin.org.uk](http://www.waiyin.org.uk)



## COVID

Planning for study abroad is a multi-step process any year, but since 2020 it has included some extra (and sometimes rather uncertain) steps due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Given the uncertainties of the virus's progress, it's important to not get too fixed on any one plan: for now, it's better just to learn how to find out the details you may need later. Here is a brief run-down of what you may need to know about UK universities and COVID-19, and where to look for further details later.

- Travel restrictions are not currently in place in the UK, and self-quarantining is no longer controlled by law (though you are still encouraged to self-quarantine in your own accommodation if you find you have tested positive for COVID-19). These rules are made at government level so the best place to look for the latest information is to search the gov.uk website here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Universities are very independent so approaches to teaching have been a little different from place to place. During periods of lockdown, most teaching moved online and some was cancelled. Post-lockdown, most universities have offered a blended approach to teaching, with online elements for large-group activities (like lectures) moving online, and smaller group activities (like seminars and tutorials remaining face-to-face). All universities have expressed a commitment to students unable to reach the university due to local lockdowns, underlying health conditions or travel restrictions, and most courses have at this point developed multiple delivery methods to support their students. The best place to find out how your university is handling or has handled the pandemic is by checking their individual websites and searching for their COVID-19 policies and procedures.
- As with teaching, pandemic measures for accommodation have varied from university to university, and it's worth checking individual university websites to see how students are managing.
- Fees have generally remained the same during the pandemic though online courses are usually cheaper to deliver, having to switch online halfway through a course is usually no cheaper for universities, and hence no cheaper for you. It is always worth checking your chosen universities' websites to see what financial support is available, and more general guidance here: <https://ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Coronavirus-Covid-19-info-for-international-students#layer-6906>
- A wide range of support systems are in place from practicalities to things like looking after your mental health during periods of isolation. We recommend the UK Council for International Student Affairs for the former <https://ukcisa.org.uk/> and the NHS Every Mind Matters pages for the latter <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>. To find out about your rights as a student, and what rules all universities have to follow to support their students, have a look at the Office for Students pages here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>.
- Visa and immigration requirements have at times been changed to accommodate students caught up in pandemic restrictions – there is useful and up-to-date information on the UKCISA pages <https://ukcisa.org.uk/> - just search COVID and visas.
- If developments in the pandemic lead you to deciding to defer or decline your offer, search COVID on the [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) site for up-to-date advice and deadlines before contacting your university directly.





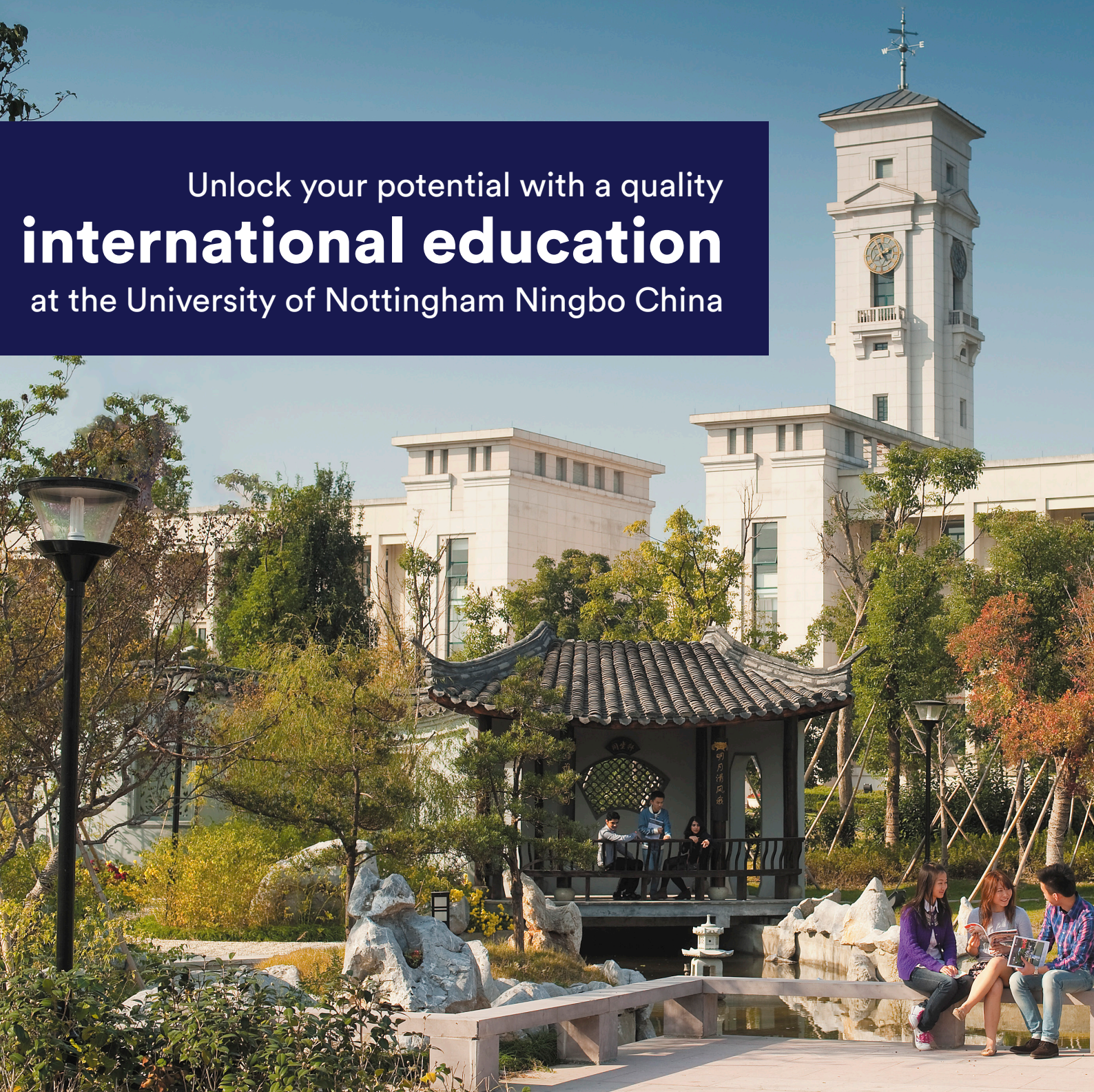
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for foreign passport  
holders in mainland  
China

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## Further information

### Admissions tests:

[Cambridge Law Test](#)  
[LNAT – National Admissions Test for Law](#)  
[Mathematics Admissions Test \(MAT\)](#)  
[Sixth Term Examination Paper \(STEP\)](#)  
[Test of Mathematics for University Admissions](#)  
[BioMedical Admissions Test \(BMAT\)](#)  
[Graduate Medical School Admissions Test \(GAMSAT\)](#)  
[Health Professions Admission Test \(HPAT Ulster\)](#)  
[University Clinical Aptitude Test \(UCAT\). Read UCAT's 2020 update on how the test will be delivered this year.](#)  
[Thinking Skills Assessment Cambridge \(TSA Cambridge\)](#)  
[Thinking Skills Assessment Oxford \(TSA Oxford\)](#)  
[Thinking Skills Assessment University College London \(TSA UCL\)](#)  
<https://www.ielts.org/>  
<https://www.ets.org/toefl/>  
<https://www.pearsonpte.com/pte-academic/>  
<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/advanced/>  
<https://englishtest.duolingo.com/>  
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/international-and-eu-students/what-level-english-do-i-need-get-uk-university>

### Applications

Virtually all you need to know about applying to university  
[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

### Choosing Courses

<https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects>  
[www.gov.uk/browse/education](http://www.gov.uk/browse/education)  
[www.Hotcourses.com](http://www.Hotcourses.com)  
<https://discoveruni.gov.uk/>  
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings>  
<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2022>  
<https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/league-tables>  
<https://www.hotcoursesabroad.com/>  
[www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide](http://www.theguardian.com/education/universityguide)  
Choosing 6th form subjects: [www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/informed-choices)  
Student reviews: [www.whatuni.com](http://www.whatuni.com)  
Online courses: [www.coursetalk.com](http://www.coursetalk.com)  
tariffs for courses: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/entry-requirements/ucas-tariff-points>  
UCAS city guides: <https://www.ucas.com/explore/locations>

### Careers

[www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk)  
[www.icould.com](http://www.icould.com)  
[www.Careersbox.co.uk](http://www.Careersbox.co.uk)  
[www.INSIDECareers.co.uk/bookstore](http://www.INSIDECareers.co.uk/bookstore)  
[www.Targetjobs.co.uk](http://www.Targetjobs.co.uk)  
[www.Prospects.ac.uk](http://www.Prospects.ac.uk)  
[www.push.co.uk](http://www.push.co.uk)

### COVID-19

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)  
[www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Coronavirus-Covid-19-info-for-international-students#layer-6906](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Coronavirus-Covid-19-info-for-international-students#layer-6906)  
<https://ukcisa.org.uk/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>  
[www.officeforstudents.org.uk/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/)  
search COVID on [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

### Finance

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice> (fees and money section)  
<https://www.visa.cn/>  
[www.Scholarship-Search.org.uk](http://www.Scholarship-Search.org.uk)

### Foundation Courses

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/choosing-course/foundation-degrees>

### Oxbridge

[www.oxbridge-admissions.info](http://www.oxbridge-admissions.info)  
[www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/undergraduate-interview-invitations](http://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/undergraduate-interview-invitations)  
<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/interviews>

### SEN

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/telling-people-youre-disabled-clear-and-easy-guide-students>  
<https://www.seniainternational.org/>

## Further information

### Support

[www.TheMix.org.uk](http://www.TheMix.org.uk)  
for those 18 and under [www.Childline.org.uk](http://www.Childline.org.uk)  
[www.TheStudentRoom.co.uk](http://www.TheStudentRoom.co.uk)

### Travel in Europe

[www.gov.uk/guidance/gap-year-foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/gap-year-foreign-travel-advice)  
[www.backpackeradvice.com](http://www.backpackeradvice.com)

### University visits

[www.OpenDays.com](http://www.OpenDays.com)

This guide was produced following our annual UK University Path events in September, co-hosted by BCCC (British Chamber of Commerce in China) and Venture Education. A number of quotations, suggestions and statistics are drawn from the talks at the event.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to:

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**London School of Economics**

**The University of St Andrews**

**The University of Oxford**

**University College London**

**UCAS**

**UK Visa & Immigration**

who so generously gave up their time to share their invaluable expertise and experience, and to Visa who made the event possible through their sponsorship.

If you are a school-based university counsellor, or potential sponsor, interested in UK University Path 2022 hosted in September, please contact [education@britishchamber.cn](mailto:education@britishchamber.cn)



This guide was compiled and designed by Venture Education

Venture Education empowers Education ecosystem in China through research, Family education, industry events and professional development. We also support schools with overseas admissions and careers education.



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[www.ventureeducation.org](http://www.ventureeducation.org)