

Mahavir Overseas Education Centre, 228, J.P. Towers, Tagore Road, Rajkot 360 002
Ph: 91-281-5545160 / 2698266

1) Before you leave

Clothing

Before leaving for the UK make sure that you are carrying the appropriate clothing required for that particular area or city you are going to study.

For the cities where the winters are severe the following clothing is necessary:

- a) Woolen overcoat
- b) Woolen gloves
- c) Leather jackets
- d) Woolen socks
- e) Woolen caps
- f) Wind cheater
- g) Thermal wear
- h) Sweaters
- i) Boots

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Even carry your casual wear like jeans, shirts and T-shirts

Luggage

Confirm with the airlines your ticket is booked with how many kilos of luggage are you officially allowed to carry so that you don't face any problem at the airport.

Visa Logistics

Every single foreign national coming into the country requires a visa except for nationals of a member state of the European Economic Area (the member states of the EU, Iceland and Norway) or if you can claim British Citizenship or any other connection with the UK, for example UK ancestry. The Commonwealth countries that still require a visa are India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Uganda, and Ghana. Non EU nationals who are working for more than six months require a resident permit.

If you are unsure you can go to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office web site and complete an interactive visa questionnaire, which will indicate whether you require a visa and detail the forms and information leaflets that are relevant to the category of application. The address to which to send applications and queries will also be given. However, as visa requirements are subject to change it is always worth checking with the nearest British Embassy.

When you have received your official letter of acceptance from the British university, you should immediately begin procedures to obtain your Student Visa. These documents are available from the nearest British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate or at the ECO office nearest to you. The process of obtaining your required immigration documents will differ between visa offices abroad and in some cases can take up to six months to complete. Please refer to the UK Visa checklist to ensure that you have all the necessary documents to complete the visa application.

Under no circumstances should you leave for the U.K until you have obtained either your Student Authorization or your Letter of Introduction from a British visa office abroad. It is not possible to change from "visitor status" to "student status" once you have entered the U.K.

Documentation

Be sure you carry all of the following information on your person. Do not pack it in your baggage.

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- Valid passport.
- Student Visa (issued by British visa post).
- Original letter of acceptance from your university
- Proof of funds available (e.g.: bank draft, transfer, letter of credit, scholarship or assistantship letter or other proof).

Insurance

It is advisable to purchase health insurance prior to your arrival in the U.K. It may be obtained in the UK, but it is complicated and expensive.

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Budget

	Male	Female
Personal Maintenance (food, clothes, laundry, toiletries)	£2716	£2846
Accommodation (rent, heating)	£2536	£2536
Social and Interest (leisure and social activities)	£700	£700
General Costs (travel, telephone calls, books)	£680	£680
TOTAL	£6632	£6762

This does not include fees for your course. Many students may spend less as the total allows for some things which are not essential. The cost for essential things only is estimated to be approximately £5500. Our welfare experts believe that is not realistic to attempt to live on less than this amount anywhere in the UK.

This estimate is only a guideline. It will permit an adequate but far from luxurious standard of living. Your first month will be expensive because of settling-in costs such as paying an extra month's rent as a damage deposit and purchasing warm clothing, textbooks and supplies. Do not purchase textbooks until after the first class in each course. Keep in mind that the above figure does not include any money for returning home or visiting other parts of the U.K, nor does it include the various sales taxes that may be applied at the time of purchase.

Accommodation

Most universities offer a variety of on-campus residences. Accommodations may range from traditional two-person dormitory rooms to suites with private baths to apartments. The typical room is furnished with a bed, desk, chair, and dresser for each student. Residence halls usually feature lounges for studying and socializing, recreation areas, laundry facilities, and a convenience store. In most cases, meal plans may be purchased in addition to the room for an all-inclusive plan. Most students choose to live on-campus in their first year, and later move off-campus in shared accommodation in senior years. Your university will usually keep a listing of all housing on and around campus that is available to students.

Arrival Details

We encourage you to arrive about two weeks before class to complete registration procedures. (If you arrive early make certain you have sufficient money to cover your living costs.) This will also allow you to get to know your way around the University and the city and to find suitable housing while there is still a variety of accommodation from which to choose. Early arrival will also make it possible to have free time to participate in planned social events, make new friends and attend orientation.

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Be sure to inform your E.C.O councilor and your university contact about your flight arrival information.

Driving

If you intend to drive a car in the U.K., you should obtain an International Driver's License in your country before coming to the UK. You must be at least 21 years old and have a major credit card to rent a vehicle in the U.K. Traffic is on the left-hand side of the road in the U.K.

Electricity

Electricity in the UK works on the 240V, 50Hz system. You will need to purchase converters if you plan to use your electrical equipment from outside the UK.

2) When you get there...

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Travel

Local travel is dependent on where you are based. You can usually travel to your school in a variety of ways, all depending on the location of your workplace in comparison to your accommodation. Sometimes you can walk to work but more than likely you will have to take either a train or a bus.

It must be noted that train and bus services are not the most reliable and can often be late or even cancelled, this applies more to cities but in towns the frequency of services will be a lot less. Train tickets have to be bought before you get on a train however with buses you can either buy the ticket before or pay the driver as you get on. It is customary to queue at bus stops and to wait your turn to ascend on to the bus, however with trains you usually do not have to queue.

Communication

Telephones

Telephone kiosks are operated by a variety of companies, but BT phones are the most common. Phone-cards, which can be purchased in post offices and at some shops, are specifically for one type of phone. Public telephones will accept coins (10p upward), and some will accept credit cards.

All calls - with the exception of numbers starting 0800 or 0500 - are charged depending on the length of call, time of day, and the distance of the call. To dial internationally, the prefix is 00. For example, to dial India, you would dial 00 91 and then the local number.

For phoning abroad it is advisable to look into the rates offered by some of the "new" phone companies, such as One Tel, First Telecom etc. - since these are normally much cheaper than BT for international calls. To speak to an operator dial 150 (free), and for number enquiries dial 192 (charged at a higher rate).

Postal Service

Postage comes in two types in the UK - first and second class. First class mail will be delivered the next day; second class may take a day longer.

Prices will vary, for airmail and surface mail, and for heavier packages. Post boxes can be found at all post offices, and on streets. They will display the collection times.

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Stamps are available at post offices, and some shops - e.g., newspaper shops - will also sell 'popular' stamps. Like coins, all stamps will have the Queen's figurehead marked on them.

For further information about postage and cost, please look at Royal Mail.

Email

The U.K. has fast and reliable access to the internet. There are numerous providers in the market, offering anything from 10 hours to unlimited access, cable to dial-up modems for home access. Often, the same company that provides your telephone service also provides your internet access. Universities will more than likely give you access to the internet with your tuition fees. There usually are computer labs dedicated to students to work on their projects and stay in contact. Just be sure to remember your password!

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Cash

The currency in the U.K. is pounds sterling (£). There are coins and paper bills. The coins are 1, 5, 10 and 25 cents.. The paper currency (or bills) is in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100.

When you arrive, try to have at least £100 in cash. A currency exchange service is usually available at the airport from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. We also recommend that you carry enough cash, traveler's cheques or bank drafts to cover at least your first month's expenses. Because of extra costs in the first month (like rental damage deposits and books) this can amount to £1,000 or more for a single student.

Banks and Bank Machines

Travellers' cheques are widely accepted in English banks and you might as well buy them in pounds sterling to avoid changing currencies twice. Change bureaux in London frequently levy outrageous commissions and fees, so make sure you establish any deductions in advance. The bureaux at the international airports are exceptions to the rule, charging less than most banks and cashing sterling travellers' cheques for free. Cashpoints (ATMs) are very common in Britain: most are linked to major credit cards as well as the Cirrus, Maestro and Plus cash networks, but if a machine swallows your card it can be a nightmare. Most banks insist on chopping it in half and sending it back to your home branch - very helpful.

Tipping

The tip, or gratuity, is not usually included in the bill for services. It is expected in many cases that you will tip, as many people live by their tips, not their wages. The following are a few people that are often tipped:

Waiters	15%
Taxi Drivers	10%-15%
Pizza Delivery	\$1.00
Hair Stylists	15%-25%

Holidays/Shopping Hours

Official Holidays

These are national holidays that schools and businesses shut down for.

New Year's Day	January 1
Bank Holiday (Scotland only)	January 4

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Saint Patrick's Day (N.Ireland only)	March 17
Good Friday	Varies (usually in April)
Easter Monday	Varies (banks and civil services are closed, but shops and offices are open)
Saint George's Day (England only)	April 23
May Day Bank Holiday	Varies (May)
Spring Bank Holiday	Varies (May)
Battle of the Boyne/Orangemen's Day (N.Ireland only)	July 12
Summer Bank Holiday (Scotland only)	Varies (August)
Late Summer Bank Holiday (excluding Scotland)	Varies (August)
Guy Fawkes night	November 5
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26

Office Hours

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Most offices open from 9 to 5 pm or 8:30 to 4:30 pm. Some close during lunch, but most of them have a receptionist there to take messages. Lunch hour is generally from 12 to 1 or from 1 to 2 pm.

Store Hours

The majority of stores are open 7 days a week, but this is still fairly new, so some of them are still closed on Sundays. Generally, the opening hours are as follows:

Monday to Wednesday	10 am to 6 pm
Thursday and Friday	10 am to 9 pm
Saturday	9 am to 5 pm
Sunday	10 am (or 12) to 5 pm

Average Prices of Commonly Purchased Goods

Note: All prices listed do not include any additional sales tax that may be added on to the goods at the time of purchase.

	London	Outside London
Pint of Milk	40p	30p
Loaf of Bread	70p	50p

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Restaurant (3-course meal)	£18	£15
Roll of Film	£3.5	£3.5
355 ml can of Coca-Cola	£55	£45
An apple	25p	20p
Cinema ticket	£7.5-9	£4
Men's Haircut	£12	£10
Ladies' Haircut	£18	£12
McDonald's Big Mac Meal	£3	£3
Quality Daily Newspaper	25-60p	25-60p
Tabloid Daily Newspaper	20-30p	0-30p
Packet of Cornflakes	£1.5	£1.5
Top Ten CD	£13	£13
Theatre Ticket	£12	£8
Short Taxi Ride	£3.5	£2.5
Man's Two Piece suit	£150	£100
Ladies Skirt	£45	£40
Running Shoes	£45	£45
Deodorant	£1.5	£1.5
3 pairs of socks	£7	£7
Pint of Beer	£2.3	£1.7
Postage Stamp	26p (30p)	26p (30p)
Long train journeys (e.g. London-Sheffield)	From £30	From £30

Studying in U.K.

Class participation is expected in UK universities. Junior-level courses are usually larger classes (300 +) , however most senior-level courses are taught in classes of less than 30 students. In senior-level courses, it is expected that there is class discussion over the course material, and it is common for students to disagree with the professor. The ability for a student to come up with original material and personal conclusions is paramount in the UK education system. Often, students spend many hours outside the classroom researching from various sources to support their thesis. Students that can support their thesis well, even if it is not in alignment with the professor, do the best in this system. If you come from a system different than this, expect a few months to adjust to the new style of teaching and learning.

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Surviving Winter

If you're coming from a warm weather climate like India, you should be prepared for the dramatic change in temperature that comes about every winter. Winter usually runs from late November until late February in the U.K. Temperatures during this time will often reach -10 Celsius. It is important to take precautions to avoid the negative effects of the cold. The main precaution taken

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by most is to go outside as little as possible. When you do have to go outside for long or if you are finding even short periods in the cold difficult to handle keep these simple tips in mind.

Don't take chances with the winter cold. Get into the habit of listening to the weather forecast on a local radio station at the beginning of each day and dress accordingly. Warm, winter clothing should not be considered a luxury. You will need it to ensure that you stay healthy and enjoy life.

Seek advice from individuals who are familiar with the climate. Look for comfort and simplicity in clothing. Ideally, and in order to withstand slush, snow, sleet and rain as well as the sand and salt used on icy sidewalks and roads, winter boots should be waterproof, warm, lightweight and stain repellent.

Winter clothing essentials might include a down (or polyester) coat or parka, mittens or gloves, and a wool hat or earmuffs. The layered look is not only fashionable but also an extremely effective way of insulating the body. Try wearing a woolen sweater over a cotton shirt or a pair of corduroy pants over cotton "longjohns" (long underwear) and you should feel warmer. Don't worry about how strange you may look; your main goal of keeping warm will be accomplished.

Eat breakfast! You will be warmer if your body has some fuel to burn.

If your skin and scalp become dry and flaky because of the cold and dry heat indoors, try using a moisturizing cream and conditioner. As well, drinking water regularly will help prevent dehydration.

Sunlight reflecting off snow on sunny days may damage your eyes or skin. You can protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses and your skin by using sunscreen.

Take into consideration the wind chill factor. High winds blowing on a cold day lower the temperature even further and a temperature of -20o Celsius with a wind of 16 kilometres per hour can feel like -25o Celsius.

Be alert to frostbite. Ears, fingers, toes or cheeks that have been exposed to freezing temperatures for even a short period of time may be severely damaged. If any part of your body should lack feeling or become pale or slightly blue, seek medical help immediately.

If you do become stranded in the cold (for whatever reason), don't hesitate to seek help. Prolonged exposure to freezing temperatures can be life threatening!

Some notes about British culture

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Do...

- stand in line, form orderly queues and wait patiently for your turn to come in shops; at bus stops, cash machines or anywhere else a number of people are waiting for the same service. Unlike some other Europeans, the English (and the British in general) become enraged by 'queue jumpers', and you may well see the English reserve crack if you attempt to push in front of others who have been waiting longer than yourself.
- shake a person's right hand with your own right hand when you are first introduced.
- say "excuse me" if someone is blocking your way and you would like them to move.
- cover your mouth with your hand when yawning or coughing.
- pay for drinks as you order them in pubs and other types of bars.
- say "please" and "thank-you" whenever appropriate.

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Don't...

- extremely insulting gesture!
- ask personal or intimate questions, such as: "How much money do you earn?" "Why aren't you married?" or "What is your age?" The English are extremely private people and this type questioning, however well-meant, is unlikely to inear you to your hosts.
- pass wind in public - through any bodily orifice!
- speak when your mouth is full of food.
- greet people with a kiss when you have never met them before (this type of behaviour is normally reserved for close friends and relatives).
- discuss politics or religion! Whilst not exactly taboo subjects, the English regard their political and religious beliefs as their own business - it really is far safer to avoid such talk, if not completely, then at least until you know your hosts a little better.

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It is acceptable to...

- use your fingers when eating a piece of chicken.
- blow your nose in public (providing you use a tissue or handkerchief).
- eat alone in a restaurant if you are a woman (however, many like to read a book while waiting to be served).
- discuss the following with somebody you have recently met: English weather conditions; television programmes (Coronation Street is a great favourite); vacations (the English call them 'holidays'); or indeed, any type of innocuous and non-personal topic.

Food and Drink British Cuisine

The most well-renowned dish of the UK is the infamous fish n' chips. Thankfully, there is a much broader selection of food choices than this delicacy. The use of spices is limited in traditional British cooking, although with the influx of immigrants from Asia, spices are gaining popularity. The main meal of the day is usually supper and is served around 6pm. The basic meal structure is meat and two vegetables sometimes accompanied with bread or a bread-substitute. Vegetarianism is limited in the UK, although gaining popularity in recent years.

3) Culture Shock

What is it?

The Adjustment Process in a New Culture

Cross Cultural Adjustment Cycle

Each stage in this process is characterised by "symptoms" or outward and inward signs representing certain kinds of behaviour.

Honeymoon Period

Initially, you will probably be fascinated and excited by everything new. Visitors are at first elated

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to be in a new culture.

Culture Shock

The visitor is immersed in new problems: housing, transportation, food, language, and new friends. Fatigue may result from continuously trying to comprehend and use the second language. You may wonder, "Why did I come here?"

Initial Adjustment

Everyday activities such as housing and going to school are no longer major problems. Although the visitor may not yet be perfectly fluent in the language spoken, basic ideas and feelings in the second language can be expressed.

Mental Isolation

Individuals have been away from their families and good friends for a long period of time and may feel lonely. Many still feel they cannot express themselves as well as they can in their native language. Frustrations and sometimes a loss of self-confidence result. Some individuals remain at this stage.

Acceptance and Integration

A routine (eg. Work, school, social life) has been established. The visitor has accepted the habits, customs, food and characteristics of the friends, associates, and the language of the country.

Return Anxiety, Reentry Shock, Reintegration

These stages should be mentioned, even at orientation, because of the very important part they play in a visitor's stay in a new culture. It is interesting to note that Reentry Shock can be more difficult than the initial Culture Shock.

Suggestions for dealing with Culture Shock

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- Keep in touch with friends and family at home
- Try to look for logical reasons why things happen. This may help you view your host culture in a more positive light.
- Try not to dwell on the negative things about your host culture and don't hang around people who do.
- Make an effort to restore communication by making friends in your host culture.
- Keep your sense of humour!
- Set small goals for yourself as high expectations may be difficult to meet.
- Speak the language of the country you are in and don't worry if you sometimes make a fool of yourself doing it!
- Take care of yourself by exercising, getting enough sleep, eating properly, and doing things you enjoy.
- Try to fit into the rhythm of life in your host culture. Adjust to their time schedule for meals and work.
- Find out where people meet and socialise. Make an effort to go to those places and observe.
- Draw on your own personal resources for handling stress. You've done it many times before and you can do it again!

How to Get Used to a New Country Quickly and Comfortably

Get a sense for the physical environment:

- Go on a tour of your locale.
- Find a colleague to show you around.

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- Find a friend and do your own walking tour
- Take a walk around your neighborhood.
- Note locations of shops and post offices and when they are open.
- Look for recreational areas such as parks or sports facilities where you could relax or rejuvenate yourself.

Get a sense for the norms of behaviour:

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- Observe people's behaviour
- How do they greet each other?
- How do they line up for a bus or train? How do they seat themselves in it?
- How do people behave in shops?
- How do people behave walking on the street?

Be Slow to Judge

Observe first and then find a "cultural informant", someone who knows the culture, and then ask. Phrases like "tell me about...", "I'm curious about...", or "what does it mean when..." show respect and invite conversation. If you demand to know "why" people act as they do, people think that you are judging their culture. While you are observing behaviour in a given situation, you might want to be thinking about how people in your culture would behave in a similar situation. That way you will learn about your culture as well as have a basis of comparison.

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