

International students

Working in the UK is a valuable experience and can be used to show how you can adapt to different environments and take on new challenges.

Your careers department can help you make the most of this experience to improve your employment prospects. We can help you understand the job market and get you started with your search for part time or full time work here or abroad.

If you're hoping to work in the UK after graduation, make it a priority to research your visa options on the government website www.gov.uk/visas-immigration, or www.ukcisa.org.uk, sooner rather than later.

Understanding your options early is important and will save you time and stress in the long run. If you need help or have questions, make the most of your college's advice services for international students. Keep your options open – there could be opportunities at home or in other countries.

UK work experience

Consider finding part time work in the UK while you are studying. This is a useful way of earning money, improving your English and getting UK work experience. You'll also be able to try out career ideas and gain skills for full time work. Be careful to understand the restrictions on your visa in terms of the number of hours you can work per week.

If you have not worked in the UK before, volunteering on campus or in the local community can provide you with references and UK experience that will improve your chances of being invited to interviews. It will also give you the opportunity to practise your English in a professional context.

Another great way to develop experience is by getting involved in clubs and societies both within your university and outside.

If you have worked for an international company in your home country, they may have offices in the UK that you could apply to for work experience.

Six ways to help start your career

1. Use social and business networking websites such as LinkedIn to maintain contacts in your home country and to get information about developments in industries you're interested in. Find out where jobs are advertised and which skills are required.
2. Use vacations to get work experience at home. It is valuable on your CV and could expand your network of contacts. This is important, as students returning home to work often get a job via a referral or hear about a vacancy from a contact.
3. Contact college alumni to give you job-hunting tips and advice on how to market yourself back home as a UK-educated student. Find out about your college's alumni network and how to use it. The British Council also run alumni events and newsletters in a range of countries.
4. Your careers department can assist you with applications and interviews. Make sure you use a format appropriate to the market to which you're applying, check that your applications are focused and targeted, and include your reasons for wanting to work for that employer.
5. Think about the skills you have to offer, such as language skills or knowledge of your home business market. Use this information to inform your job hunting by identifying which employers will have use for your skills.
6. Keep up to date with the latest changes with visa regulations so you know exactly what you are eligible to do. You may find it helpful to include this in your applications to employers.

Frequently asked questions

Can the careers department give me visa advice?

We can help you with career guidance, job searching, applications and interviews but we're not qualified to give advice on immigration and visas. Your college will have a separate department with immigration advisers who can give international students all the latest information and advice. The careers department can tell you how to contact the right department if you're not sure.

What is a national insurance number and how do I go about getting one?

To work in the UK a National Insurance number is required for tax purposes. You can apply for one as soon as you arrive in the UK, if you have the right to work or study. Please see www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number for details of how to apply. You will not need to have a national insurance number before you start work, or start looking for work as your employer can give you a temporary number.

I've heard of recruitment agencies but how do I use them to help me find a job?

Recruitment agencies act on behalf of employers to help them find staff. However, due to visa restrictions it will be easier for international students to apply directly to companies.

Can my careers department recommend me to employers?

We can help you to find out about employers and how to network. We also hold events and presentations on campus where you can hear from companies and meet their representatives, but we don't recommend students to companies.

Working in the UK after study

If you're interested in working in the UK after study then we suggest you start planning for this as early as you can. You will need to identify potential employers while bearing in mind any regulations that apply to you because of your immigration status. You will need to identify credible sources of information and your plan will probably need to be adjusted as you discover more.

Your careers department can help you with planning and signpost you to other information sources. It can be challenging to find work and achieve visa sponsorship in the UK and many graduates find it useful to have a back-up plan. While it can be difficult to stay in the UK there are a number of routes for this such as; Tier 1 (entrepreneur), Tier 2 (graduate level work), Tier 5 (youth mobility), and the Doctorate Extension Scheme. See the UKCISA website for more information:

www.ukcisa.org.uk/information--advice/working/working-after-studies

Useful resources

Working outside the UK

- www.careerstagged.co.uk - graduate careers resources selected by the University of London's careers specialists. Search by country or by sector.
- Going Global - country-specific information on topics like writing a CV, interviews, cultural advice and visas/work permits. Check with your careers service about access to the subscription-based content.
- www.targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/working-abroad - profiles and information on working in different countries.

Working in the UK

- www.ukcisa.org.uk - information on work and study for international students in the UK
- www.gov.uk - information about immigration, working rights and regulations for living in the UK
- www.ish.org.uk - a centre for social and cultural events for international students in London