



Pre-arrival Information for International Students Living in the UK

Background and History

The School of English in London (TSEL) was established in 2014 as a private institution and with the aim of providing English language tuition for international students, particularly from the European Union and other non-English speaking countries.

Currently, TSEL prepares students for the examinations of Cambridge ESOL, Pearson and Trinity College London and other similar awarding bodies.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the College is 'To create an educational environment, which meets the academic and intellectual needs of every student studying at The School of English in London'.

About London

London is the capital and largest city in England. It is one of the world's largest financial centres. London is very densely populated and therefore has a huge underground railway network, which is the oldest in the world. It is particularly famous for sites such as Buckingham Palace, Wembley Stadium, Big Ben, the River Thames and Tower Bridge. London's Oxford Street is the busiest shopping area in Europe, where you will find a vast range of department stores. There are also a large number of parks and gardens, giving you the option of relaxing, away from the busy streets of London. However, one of the busiest areas to relax is the West End. It is known as 'Theatreland' and located in Leicester Square.

London is a very culturally diverse city with over 300 different languages spoken and provides a huge network to the rest of the UK, making travelling easily accessible for you to be able to explore even more of the UK's cultures. To find out more about London, go to www.visitlondon.com where you will find general information plus where to find tourist information Centres.

Climate

The British climate can seem very harsh to some students who come from a warm climate, and the dampness in winter can make it seem even colder. In winter the temperature can go down to about 0 – 5 degrees during the day and sometimes lower at night, so make sure you have warm clothes, which will protect you in all types of weather.

Seasons	Average daytime temperatures for London
Summer	21 C
Autumn	14C
Winter	8C
Spring	13C

More information on British weather can be found on the following website:
www.bbc.co.uk/weather

The Culture

English people will generally be welcoming and friendly. Adjusting to the English way of life may take a little time though.

- Basic politeness is expected, such as saying **please, thank you** and **sorry**.
- You should attempt to make all appointments or meetings on time, as punctuality is very important.
- When waiting for a bus, train, or to buy something in a shop or to be seen for an appointment by someone, people will form a queue – it is considered rude to push yourself to the front of a queue.
- The humour usually involves the use of irony and can be difficult to understand.
- The roles of men and women may be different to what they are in your home country.
- People will make an effort not to invade your personal space or privacy. However, this can easily be misread as being unsociable, reserved or distant.
- British people will not always say what they mean or they will speak indirectly about a subject. This is so as not to be impolite or hurt one's feelings.
- There are many regional accents in England which therefore might be difficult to understand. Do not feel bad about asking people to speak slower or to repeat themselves.
- Freedom of speech is seen as a necessity, so disagreeing with others is fine, especially in lectures and the classroom.

Britain is generally very welcoming towards people of other nationalities which will help your stay to be an enjoyable one.

Holidays

Major holidays or bank holidays in the UK include New Year's Day (1st January), Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday, May Day (1st May), Christmas Day (25th December) and Boxing Day (26th December). Virtually all services close down for Christmas Day including restaurants, shops and transport.

Your Journey to the UK Begins...

Getting Entry Clearance

Overseas students will require a visa to study in the UK. As a student, you will need to apply for and obtain a student visa, for example under the **Short Term Study Visa** route from the British High Commission or British Embassy in your country before travelling to the UK. The list of countries whose nationals will require a visa prior to travelling is available on the UKVisa website at: www.ukvisas.gov.uk.

Even for those who do not require a visa to come to the UK, but stay in the UK for more than six months, you must obtain 'entry clearance' from your nearest British Embassy or High Commission before travelling to the UK. The only exceptions would be if:

- You are a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland
- You are a British National (Overseas)
- Another type of British national who does not have the right of abode in the UK, even if you want to come for more than 6 months.

Short Term Study Visa Route

Under the Short Term Study Visa route, you are required to meet certain conditions in order to enter the UK as a student. For this, you will need to provide documentation to support your application for a visa or entry clearance.

The conditions of entry to the UK as a student are:

- You must have a Letter of Acceptance from the College (TSEL) to undertake a short course of study in the UK, such as an English language course or a Seminar or a training course or to do a short period of research as part of a degree.
- You must have the ability and intention to follow the course
- You must intend to leave the UK at the end of your studies
- You do not intend to take employment
- You must have enough money to pay for your fees and maintenance (and that of any dependant spouses or children) without working and having recourse to public funds.

For further details, you can visit: www.ukcisa.org.uk/

You may need the following documents when you apply for your entry clearance:

- a) Acceptance Letter from our College
- b) Detailed Bank Statement for six months of Applicant or Sponsor, to establish that Applicant can maintain themselves in the United Kingdom throughout their required period of stay without having recourse to public funds.
- c) Educational qualifications confirming prior study in your country.

For more information, please visit - <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/>

Immigration, Customs and Passport Control

At the Port of Entry with a visa or entry certificate, you will still have to pass through the UK immigration control on arrival in the UK. If an Immigration Officer believes that you no longer meet the criteria to enter the UK or that any of the information you gave was false, she/he could refuse your entry.

When you arrive in the UK you may still need to satisfy the Immigration Officer at the port of entry by providing your official documents to be able to enter the UK legally. Therefore, you need to ensure you have:

- Your valid passport, complete with your entry visa
- Acceptance Letter
- Evidence of financial support
- Details of accommodation in the UK (such as a tenancy agreement OR college letter or Letter from family confirming that they will provide accommodation free of charge)
- Evidence of a recent medical examination (you can also check with your embassy if required)

Packing Check List

Here are some of the important things you will need to bring with you for your pleasant stay.

Hand Luggage

- Valid passport
- Entry visa/entry certificate
- Original documents supporting your application to TSEL, including transcripts of grades
- Acceptance Letter
- Letter confirming your accommodation and the contact details of the person who will pick you from the airport
- Travel tickets
- Travel sickness medication
- Any prescribed medication, in original packaging along with its original prescription.
- Some British currency (approx. £50-100 cash in British sterling)

Customs

You will be required to pass through the Customs area of the airport. You are only allowed to bring a certain amount of goods into the UK tax-free. In addition, some goods are completely prohibited. You can check with your local British Embassy or High Commission if you are unsure what you are allowed to bring. For British High commissions across the globe, please visit <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/embassies-and-posts/>

Travelers Cheque and cash

It is strongly recommended that you carry a traveler's cheque that can be cashed at any British Airport very conveniently. For further details please check: <http://www.thomascook.com/money/>

We strongly suggest that you carry some cash in Pounds Sterling before you start your journey, as it may be needed at the airport to buy food, make phone calls or to pay for transportation.

For more information please visit: http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/arriving_in_uk.php

Suitcase

- Address books
- Alarm clock
- Night wear
- Lightweight robe or dressing gown
- Contact lenses and/or glasses along with a spare set of glasses and current optical prescription
- A pair of slippers
- At least one pair of comfortable walking shoes
- Appropriate wear for rainy days
- At least one outfit to wear to special social/cultural events
- For winter, carry a warm coat, jumpers/sweaters, gloves, boots, a scarf and a hat
- For summer, bring trousers and jeans along with comfortable shirts
- Long-sleeved shirts with sweaters and sweatshirts to stay warm
- Toiletries

Airport Pick-up Facilities

Where a prospective student requires a representative from our College to pick them up from the airport, sufficient notice of at least two weeks must be given to TSEL. Information on the full flight schedule, which must include the flight number, estimated time and date of arrival and the Airport Terminal, must be provided. On arrival students will be required to wait at the Airport Information Centre, in case he/she does not immediately see our representative. A pick up fee of £60.00 (for Heathrow Airport) £100.00 (for Gatwick Airport) must be remitted in advance with the prospective student's tuition fees.

Accommodation

To apply for accommodation you can send off an application form to the TSEL Accommodation Officer (Information given on our website). Our accommodation officer will then deal with your situation by negotiating with a local estate agent. If you have any problems with your request please email: info@tsel.co.uk

There are many different types of accommodation to choose from including;

Flats: Rent paid monthly and you will be legally responsible for the property.

Home stay: Staying with a host who would provide a bed, breakfast, an evening meal and laundry facilities.

Deposits: You will have to give the landlord a sum of money before you move in. This money will be given back to you at the end of your stay in the rented accommodation. It is usually about the same as one month's rent.

Utility Bills: Every month you will have to pay bills such as gas, electricity, water, telephone and internet. You should read your gas and electricity meters regularly and inform the companies of the readings just after moving in and before leaving.

Food and Drink: You may find English food very different to what you are used to at home. Exotic foods can be a lot more expensive in England. The best places to shop for cheaper food and drink products are supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, and ASDA). There will also be plenty of smaller 'convenience' stores. These will generally be more expensive but are useful when you only need a small amount of food and the larger shops are too far away.

If you are living in catered accommodation, make sure you inform the landlord/lady or catering staff of any special diet or any religious events you wish to observe. A lot of the social life in England revolves around pubs and bars. Anyone over the age of 18 can visit pubs. However, never feel you have to accept an alcoholic drink if you don't want to. You can always ask for a soft drink, such as Coca-Cola, Orange juice or water.

Health Care

International students in the UK are entitled to free healthcare on the National Health Service (NHS), provided you are studying for a course over six months in length. You should register with a local doctor as soon as possible after your arrival. Listings of doctors and dentists in the UK are available at www.nhs.uk. If you plan on bringing your spouse and/or children, they will also qualify for free healthcare. There is however a small charge for prescriptions.

Banking

Cash Points (ATMs)

There are many cash points around the college. These ATMs accept Visa, Visa Electron, American Express, Plus, Link, MasterCard, Maestro and Cirrus.

Banks

You will find that most banks in England offer an international student bank account. The banks will usually offer a deal to make up for the charge. E.g. rail travel discounts mobile phone deals and insurance.

Opening a Bank Account

Some students will arrive with their personal bank account and bank cards from their respective countries. If you are a member of an international bank that exists here in the UK, you will find it easier to open an account here. In any case, you will need a letter from the college to confirm that you are a student in this country. The letter we offer is usually enough to take along with any other required documents such as passport or other forms of identification.

Electricity

The UK uses 3 point rectangular electrical sockets; Mains voltage: 240v; Frequency: 50Hz
You are able to buy adaptors from many shops in the UK and in your own country, if your electrical sockets are different.

After arriving at TSEL

As soon as you have cleared immigration and customs, you will be required to attend the college to sort out registration and any other incomplete matters. This means that you should attend the college at the earliest possible time (if possible on the first Monday after arrival). Once at the college, you will be taken through a series of steps that will prepare and equip you for the terms ahead. Some areas that will be addressed are:

Induction and enrolment

You will have been given the date and time of your induction to TSEL. Please make sure that you attend on the scheduled day, as this will help you settle into life at the College and also give you the chance to meet other students.

Please bring with you:

- Your offer letter from the college
- Your passport
- Tuition fees for your course (or whatever amount is outstanding, if any)
- Your police registration document (if you have one)
- 2 passport size photographs

Students support and Counselling

All grievances, harassment claims and personal issues are first addressed by the Student Welfare Officer whose remit includes dispute resolutions and advice. The College has a Complaints Form which can be used.

Students ID card

Each student is issued with a photo identification card and an identification number. The card contains specific details of the particular student and can be used for identification purposes should the need arise. The card is free and renewed annually or at the end of the course. If lost, the card may be replaced with a small charge of £5 at the discretion of the college Administration.

Library

At the college, a **learning resource centre**, supported by a small **library** is in place for the purpose of students' research. Books can be borrowed for up to a week at a time to help with undertaking course assignments.