

department for

**education and skills**

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The  
British  
Council

International students working in the UK

*What you need to know*



**EDUCATION**<sup>UK</sup>  
the best you can be

# 'I am an international

## ENGLISH (Yngg-) v.f. (arc

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### **I am a student from a European Economic Area country. Can I work in the UK?**

Yes. As a student from a European Economic Area (EEA) country, you do not need permission to work in the UK. Be ready to show an employer your passport or identity card as proof that you are a national of an EEA country. The eighteen EEA countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

*From 1 May 2002, students from Switzerland enjoy the same entry and residence rights as students from EEA countries and do not need permission to work in the UK.*

The remainder of this leaflet does not apply to you.

### **I am a student from outside the European Economic Area. Can I work in the UK?**

Provided you meet the conditions set out below, you may:

- work in your spare time while studying, and full-time during vacations
- take a work placement with an employer (sandwich students)
- take an internship placement with an employer.

But you may not work if your visa or passport stamp states, 'No work' or 'Employment prohibited' or that you must 'not engage in employment' (unless it also contains the words 'consent of the Secretary of State').

**Please read the remainder of this leaflet.**

### **What conditions apply to the hours and types of work I can do?**

As an international student from outside the EEA, you may not:

- work for more than twenty hours per week during term time, except in the case of an agreed work placement or internship
- engage in business, self-employment or provide services as a professional sportsperson or entertainer
- pursue a career by filling a permanent full-time vacancy.

### **Do I need to get permission to work?**

No. All international students from outside the EEA who are studying in the UK are authorised to work, subject to the conditions above. You no longer require permission from a Job Centre to take work in the UK and you do not need individual permission from the Department for Education and Skills or Work Permits (UK) for a sandwich or internship placement.

### **I am on a short course. What can I do if my visa or passport stamp does not allow me to work?**

If you are a 'visa national' (in other words, you had to apply for a visa before you travelled to the UK), check the third line of your visa:

- If it says that it is a 'visitor' type of visa, it will not be possible for you to get the condition changed. You must not work in the UK.

# student. Can I work in the UK?'

- If it says that it is a 'student' type of visa, you can apply for your conditions to be changed so that you are allowed to work (subject to the conditions described above). Get advice from an international student adviser at your place of study about how to do that, or if there is not one, telephone UKCOSA's advice line (+44 (0)20 7354 5210 - Monday to Friday, between 1300 and 1600).

If you do not know whether or not you are a 'visa national', check the list provided in leaflet INF1, which can be accessed on-line from: [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)

If you are not a 'visa national', and provided you meet the immigration rules for students (see the Home Office leaflet *Information about Students*), you can apply for your conditions to be changed so that you are allowed to work (subject to the conditions described above). Get advice from an international student adviser at your place of study about how to do that, or if there is not one, telephone UKCOSA's advice line (+44(0)20 7354 5210 - Monday to Friday, between 1300 and 1600).

## **I intend to travel to the UK to take a short course. How can I get a visa or passport stamp that will allow me to work in the UK?**

If you are applying for a visa, tell the Entry Clearance Officer that you would like to be allowed to work in the UK. He or she will then check if you meet the immigration rules for students. If you do, he or she may give you conditions that allow you to work.

If you are not applying for a visa, tell the same thing to the Immigration Officer at the port of entry.

## **What does a student visa or passport stamp state about work?**

If you were admitted to the UK as a student with conditions that allow you to work, your visa or passport stamp will state, 'No recourse to public funds. Work (and any changes) must be authorised'. You are authorised to work in the UK, subject to the conditions above.

If you have been granted an extension of stay as a student by the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate your passport stamp will state,

'Leave to remain in the United Kingdom, on condition that the holder maintains and accommodates himself and any dependants without recourse to public funds, does not enter or change employment paid or unpaid without the consent of the Secretary of State for Employment and does not engage in any business or profession without the consent of the Secretary of State for the Home Department is hereby given: until - [date] - on behalf of the Secretary of State, Home Office - [date] -'.

Consent on an individual basis from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (who has taken over these responsibilities from the former Secretary of State for Employment) is no longer required. You are authorised to work in the UK, subject to the conditions above.

## **Can I work my way through college or university?**

You must be able to support and accommodate yourself and any dependants and pay for your studies without working in the UK and without recourse to public funds (these are described in the Home Office leaflet *Information about Students*).

However, when your means are assessed, anticipated income can be taken into account if the establishment at which you will be studying:

- is a publicly funded institution of further or higher education which is itself providing and guaranteeing the employment (and has provided details of how much you will earn), or
- is able, if you are a sandwich student, to guarantee that there is a job available and how much you will earn.

You may use accumulated savings from your work in the UK to show you have the financial means to take another course if you wish to continue studying in the UK.

## **Can my husband or wife work in the UK?**

Your husband or wife will be given a visa or passport stamp that allows them to work if you were given permission to stay in the UK for twelve months or more.

If your husband or wife plans to join you in the UK, you should send them a copy of your passport so that he or she can show the Entry Clearance Officer or Immigration Officer that you have been given permission to stay in the UK for twelve months or more.

If you were given permission to stay in the UK for less than twelve months, your husband or wife will be given a visa or passport stamp that does not allow them to work in the UK at all.

### **Do I need a National Insurance number?**

You will need to apply for a National Insurance number but you do not need to have received your National Insurance number before you can start work. Your local Benefits Agency (National Insurance Contributions Section) will advise you on how to apply. You will need to provide the Benefits Agency with two forms of identity (for example: passport, birth certificate, bank statement) and details of when you received a job offer or started work. You may be allocated a temporary National Insurance number while your application is being processed.

Your employer can allow you to start work, and deduct National Insurance contributions, for the six to twelve weeks after the interview it may take for the Benefits Agency to issue your National Insurance card. Your employer may wish to see a copy of your application form for a National Insurance number (CA5404) as proof. He or she will not be penalised by the Inland Revenue if there is a delay in issuing your National Insurance number.

### **What is a sandwich course?**

A sandwich course is a course that includes a clearly defined work placement, which is approved by the institution providing the course. Students subject to conditions restricting employment will be allowed to follow a sandwich course provided that:

- the course leads to a degree or to a qualification awarded by a nationally recognised examining body, and
- the work placement does not extend beyond the end of the course

### **What is an internship?**

An internship is a short period of paid work, which an employer may offer a potential employee. The internship may be offered to a student on a first or higher degree course in the UK, even if the potential permanent employment is outside the UK. A student subject to conditions restricting employment will be allowed to undertake an internship provided that:

- the student has not previously undertaken an internship with the employer
  - the internship is for not longer than three months
  - it is an established part of the employer's recruitment procedure
  - it offers pay and conditions of employment comparable to those for a 'resident worker' doing the same work
- \* it is completed within the current period of leave as a student.

### **Do I need a visa to study in the UK?**

You should see the Foreign and Commonwealth Office leaflet British Visa Requirements, Information for Students (INF3). This is on the Internet at: [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)

If you have not yet travelled to the UK, a printed copy can be obtained free from any British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate which operates an entry clearance service. If you are in the UK, you can obtain a printed copy from: Visa Correspondence Section, UKvisas, London SW1A 2AH, telephone +44 (0)20 7008 8438 for general enquiries, +44 (0)20 7008 8308 for application forms or email at [Visasfor.UK@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Visasfor.UK@fco.gov.uk).

### **What are the immigration rules for students?**

You should see the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate leaflet Information about Students. This is on the Internet at: [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?pageID=107](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/default.asp?pageID=107)

Printed leaflets can be obtained from: Communications Team, 12th Floor, Apollo House, 36 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 3RR. For multiple copies telephone +44(0)20 8649 7878.

## Note to employers

Employing international students (students from overseas) is legal, subject to the conditions outlined in this leaflet.

In addition, you can employ an international student even if he or she has not yet received a final National Insurance number.

Employers need to ensure that they see either of the following original documents and that it relates to the person they wish to employ:

A passport or national identity card issued by a State which is a party to the European Economic Area Agreement and which describes the holder as a national of that State

*or*

A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the person named has current leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom and is not precluded from taking the employment in question.

Employers should make a copy or record of this document.

This leaflet, aimed at international students, contains answers to some frequently asked questions.

This leaflet is aimed at international students in the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and explains the rules on taking work in the UK. It is a guide and aims to answer frequently asked questions. If it does not answer your question please contact Work Permits (UK) on +44(0) 114 259 4074 or visit their website at [www.workpermits.gov.uk](http://www.workpermits.gov.uk) for further information.

You can obtain more copies of this leaflet from:

Prolog  
PO Box 5050  
Annesley  
Nottingham NG15 0DL

Telephone +44(0)845 60 222 60  
Fax +44(0)1623 759045  
E-mail [dfes@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dfes@prolog.uk.com)

Please give this product code: Int-Stu-Work-2.

This leaflet is available on the Internet at  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students/workleaflet](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/international-students/workleaflet)

For further information on studying in the UK and access to a  
searchable database of courses and institutions, visit:  
[www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

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