

student

# RELOCATION guide

Welcome to the United Kingdom

## Message from Director and Staff, BVI London Office

One of the core mandates of the BVI London Office is to provide support for you as a BVI student during your time in the United Kingdom. You are therefore one of our highest priorities and you should feel free at all times to call upon us for whatever assistance, guidance or support you need during your time in the UK.

The calendar of activities for students on page 7 of this guide provides a sample of our outreach efforts, but we are not limited to what is there. So please, let us hear from you.

You should ensure that you register with the London Office so we can maintain communication with you as

well as assist you in the event of a personal emergency. Your personal details are secured by UK Data Protection laws which prohibit their sharing without your consent.

Think of BVI House as your home away from home and the staff at the London Office as your family. We have established a resource centre where you can come to read the local newspapers, access BVI information, meet up with BVI friends or just relax over a cup of tea.

We look forward welcoming you to BVI House and to supporting you during your time in the UK.

## Introduction

UK universities are among the highest-ranked in the world. So making the decision to study in the UK could be valuable to your career.

This student relocation guide will help you to get settled quickly so that you can smoothly transition to your main purpose - your studies. This guide explains the first steps you need to take shortly after arrival and gives tips on travel, accommodation, accessing health care among other useful information.

Even though the guide is for students, other persons relocating to the UK will also find this guide beneficial. The United Kingdom (UK) is one of the most popular destinations in the world. While studying in the UK, you should also take the opportunity to view its picturesque landscape: from castles and caves, to small sea coast villages, there are many interesting places to visit including the birthplace of literary greats like Shakespeare and Jane Austen.

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## BEFORE YOU LEAVE...PLAN

Before you leave the BVI to travel to the UK for the first time, map your journey carefully. Check into your arrival airport, the transportation services that operate from there and your final destination.

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

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

[www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

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

If you have any questions before you leave, please call the London Office for assistance.

## Opening a Bank Account



Opening a bank account in the UK can be a difficult and frustrating process if approached incorrectly.

If you are on a government scholarship or bond with funds in the BVI, please ensure you bring a bank statement showing the funds from the Government.

With a British passport you can open an account. Security measures have been set as controls to deter illegal activities.

Many banks do offer student accounts and savings account. You can open an account for a small fee, but only with the relevant documents.

Government cheques cannot be cashed over the counter. Cheques must be deposited into your account. However, upon your initial arrival you

may want to hold all your funds in your BVI account and withdraw accordingly until you have securely obtained a UK bank account. Once you have secured the UK bank account all future funds received from the BVI, should be converted to a bank draft in pounds to deposit in your account.

Holders of a UK passport are able to open a savings account. Confirmation of a permanent UK address in the form of a utility bill is required. Housing leases unfortunately cannot be accepted as the authenticity cannot be confirmed.

Please remember that the various banks have different policies which are updated regularly. Its best to contact a banking institution prior to your arrival in the UK.

## Renting a Flat/Apartment



Many people obtain rental properties through agencies, but this can be expensive. Agencies often have to complete a credit check on intended tenants, which includes notifying previous landlords, and verifying bank accounts, and source of income. To get an idea of the average cost for rents in different areas, visit

[www.findaproperty.com](http://www.findaproperty.com),

[www.primelocation.co.uk](http://www.primelocation.co.uk) and

[www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

Many properties in the UK can be rented furnished, eliminating the need to purchase furnishings..

You can also find properties in papers such as 'LOOT' available in shops or online at [www.loot.com](http://www.loot.com)

If the University is offering boarding, I would strongly suggest you take advantage of this option at the least for the first year.

Persons that are recipients of scholarships, and grants should bring all letters or contracts with financial details to provide to the letting agents

If you decided to rent on your own, it would be advisable to ensure you have at least six (6) month's rent to pay upfront in the absence of a credit or reference history if contract or bond documents are not accepted.

Another option is to share an apartment/flat. Again, this is recommended after your first year and not as a first option. Flat share is very common and less expensive. It is important to obtain this type of property through a secured avenue. If a deposit is given, ensure it is registered with an agent. Ensure a valid tenancy agreement is signed and in place. Find out what bills are included in the

rental amount. Get to know a bit about the person you intend to share with.

Find out:

- Deposit amount
- Crime statistics in the area

Always pay rent by Direct Deposit for record keeping.

It is strongly suggested that you visit Student Accommodation websites for detailed information.

If you are a student, and have moved into off campus property, obtain a letter from your University stating that you are a full time student for **Council Tax Exemption**. You will soon note that proof of address is needed for any transaction be it monetary or otherwise. Hence, it is important to establish your place of residence in the UK as soon as possible.

## National Insurance (NI) Number



The National Insurance system was developed to assist the unemployed, while providing the financial support to the National Health Services (NHS) and financial backing to provide pension payments at retirement for individuals in the UK that qualify for such services.

All students and individuals hoping to work in the UK, whether through an internship or part-time employment

should apply for a national insurance card. To apply, find the closest Job Centre Plus to you.

You will need:

- proof of address
- proof of identity (ie. passport)
- proof that you are entitled to work in the UK and
- proof that you are seeking work

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

## Employment



The UK is diverse and offers jobs in nearly every field you can imagine. What many people do not anticipate is the high level of competition.

It is important to have an updated Curriculum Vitae/Resume that is very detailed and captures your skills,

education and experience clearly. In the UK, securing a job can be challenging but not impossible. Every year the BVI London Office offers seminars to guide students and other persons on entering the job market.

## Obtaining a Driving License/Travelling by Car

If you intend to drive in the UK, it is important to have a valid UK licence, before doing so. You can exchange your BVI licence for a UK licence. Obtain a form from your local Post Office, and mail it to The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA); see the website below. This is only on the basis that you have a valid BVI driver's licence.

You will also need to ensure that you are insured to drive a vehicle and that the vehicle has valid road tax.

[www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/vehicles.aspx](http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/vehicles.aspx)

When driving in Central London, look out for Congestion Zones which will result in a fine if you have not already paid your Congestion Charge (from £8). Congestion charge is imposed on individuals who use their own vehicles to drive in Central London, and is designed to encourage you to use public transport.

[www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/congestioncharging](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/congestioncharging)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EXCHANGING YOUR LICENSE, GO TO:**

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/DrivingInGbOnAForeignLicence/DG\\_4022562](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/DrivingInGbOnAForeignLicence/DG_4022562)

## Public Transport/Travel

The UK is known to have one of the best transport systems in the world, with easy access by underground, bus, coach and train to most locations.

If you live in London, you may wish to obtain an Oyster Card. An Oyster Card holds the money you have credited and is only debited when it is used. Obtain an application form from your University, any Underground station or online [www.oystercard.com](http://www.oystercard.com)

As a student you are allowed 30% discount on monthly travel cards. Outside London similar services may be available and you should enquire at your University admin office, the local post office or a National Rail station.

Visit [www.16-25railcard.co.uk](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk)

for a rail discount card.

Another cheap way of getting around the UK is by coach buses.

Visit the Transport for London website at [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk) which has information for all of the services in and around London.

When you were in the BVI, it was a dream to visit places like Paris, and Belgium. The Eurostar allows easy rail travel to the Continent at affordable prices.

[www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)  
[www.interrailnet.com](http://www.interrailnet.com)

In London you can visit places like the Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, St. Paul's Cathedral, House of Parliament, Buckingham Palace and various Theatres for performances and the Opera all accessible via the Underground Trains.

For overground trains across the UK [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

## Accessing Health Care



The National Health Service (NHS) is the main source of health care for many in the UK. Free hospital services are provided to the majority of residents, including students and holders of European Union– passports.

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/PolicyandGuidance/International/OverseasVisitors](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/PolicyandGuidance/International/OverseasVisitors)

We strongly advise locating the nearest General Practitioner's (GP) Office/Surgery to your campus or place of abode. Anyone can visit the Accident and Emergency ward of an NHS hospital and receive free medical

treatment.

Even so, it's advisable to have private health insurance if you can afford it.

When applying to register with the GP, it is important you take with you either your school identification card, drivers licence or passport. In addition you will need two proofs of address: utility bill, phone bill, bank statement or tenancy agreement.

See the site below to locate GPs and other NHS services near you.

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Council Tax and Utility Bills



If you are a student, living on campus you are excluded from council tax. If not, you will have to pay the council tax for your flat. ([www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk))

Other bills include TV licensing (mandatory) [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk), water, electric, gas, television viewing service bills (cable and digital), etc. There are many service providers and it is left to each person to select a provider that is affordable and offers the services wanted.

Many properties have existing phone lines and require a simple phone call with your postcode and flat number to

be reconnected.

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

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

Most service providers allows for 70% of your transactions to be over the phone. It is important for each person to keep a running budget of all expenses. as it is easy to run into debt and taint your credit history . Your credit history can open and close doors of opportunities and should be guarded. The BVI London Office can be of assistance if you require the names or numbers of service providers.

## Telephone Services



### **Mobile/Cell phones:**

Upon arrival it is prudent to obtain a UK-based sim card for your mobile/cell phone. If your phone is unlocked in BVI, this should be an easy process. In some cases, your

BVI phone may not work in the UK.

In this case you will need to purchase a new phone (this does not have to be an expensive endeavour) of your contact details.

In either case, find a mobile phone shop that can unlock your phone, as it is necessary to keep your mobile nearby with credit to contact family at home and notify the BVI London office. There are data protection laws in the UK and your personal details will be kept confidential.

Visit T-Mobile, Orange, 3, O2 and find the best mobile plan for you. There are a wide range of contracts and 'pay-as-you-go' options. Ensure you do not lock yourself into plans that you

cannot maintain.

#### Landline phones:

You can obtain calling cards to call home or use discounted services like Telestunt [www.telestunt.co.uk](http://www.telestunt.co.uk)

In addition to Telestunt, Telediscount is also very reliable in making affordable calls

#### Internet phone:

**Skype** is now very popular and allows you to be in contact inexpensively using your computer or an internet cafe [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

## Shopping and Eating



#### Groceries:

You can food shop affordably at supermarkets like Iceland, ASDA, Tesco, Sainsbury and many open markets. Marks & Spencer and Waitrose offer basic foodstuffs as well as extensive luxury ranges.

#### Clothing and Homewares:

Shopping in the UK can be fun! For trendy and fashionable clothes there are shops such as Primark, H&M, Topshop, New Look and **many more**.

Most of the supermarkets mentioned above (particularly, ASDA, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencers) offer their own clothing, health and houseware lines.

If you are looking for a range of items in one place, try the department stores

[www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)  
[www.debenhams.com](http://www.debenhams.com)  
[www.selfridges.com](http://www.selfridges.com)

#### Pharmacies:

Many pharmacies in the UK stock

make-up and beauty and health products as well as food, photography equipment, optometrist services and small home appliances

[www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com)  
[www.superdrug.com](http://www.superdrug.com)

#### Dining Out and Entertainment:

There is so much to see and do in the UK, that it's best to refer to some of the local printed guides for assistance in making your decisions.

[www.timeout.com](http://www.timeout.com)  
[www.thisislondon.co.uk](http://www.thisislondon.co.uk)

It's also worth noting that many coffee houses offer free wifi internet access (consult individual shops for information on registering)

If you are a student, get an NUS Card, which is a student discount card with a range of exclusive discounts. It can be used to stretch your pound on items like books, clothes, travel, computer equipment and other necessities. Visit

[www.nus.org.uk/NUS-Extra](http://www.nus.org.uk/NUS-Extra)

## Beauty and Health

The water and air in the UK is very different from that in the BVI and can result in changes to both your hair and skin texture.

### **Hair care Tip:**

Due to the weather conditions, your hair will require lots of moisture to avoid damage.

Black hair care products are not always easily found. Ensure you bring at least a month's supply until you can locate the products that are right for you.

You can always search the Internet and locate salons and Afro-hair shops.

## Activities and Services for BVI Students

The BVI London Office supports students studying in the UK by facilitating activities and providing services that foster their development outside of the classroom. On an annual basis, we sponsor activities for students, including the following:

1. **Lunch and Open Forum with the Premier:** During the annual Overseas Territories Consultative Council (OTCC) meeting, an afternoon is set aside for the Premier to meet with students over lunch to update them on matters at home and hear their concerns and views.
2. **Premier's Receptions:** At least once per year, the Premier hosts a reception at BVI House for friends of the BVI, including business, social and political friends. Students are always invited to this and other official functions at BVI House.
3. **Annual Professional Development Seminar:** This one day workshop provides students with valuable skills required for their personal and professional suc-

cess. Past workshops have included sessions on networking, dress for success and financial services.

4. **Field Trips and Special Interest Activities:** Opportunities to experience the rich diversity of the UK are provided through various activities organised by the London Office. Students can also participate in events, activities and functions made available to the London Office based on their area of interest.

The London office also assists students with internship, networking and referral opportunities. Students have open access to the London Office Resource Centre on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of BVI House where they can access BVI specific information including newspapers, books and other publications, or just relax and meet fellow students.

**Other Services:** Using its vast database of contacts and relationships, the London Office also assists students with: Internships, Referrals and Networking Opportunities



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[www.bvi.org.uk](http://www.bvi.org.uk)

**REMEMBER: THE EMERGENCY SERVICES  
 NUMBER IN THE UK IS '999'**

**EMERGENCY CONTACT:**

What if something goes badly wrong while you're in the UK?  
 What if you're the victim of a crime, or fall ill?  
 Register details with the BVI London Office.  
 Emergency contact is very important.

[www.bvi.org.uk](http://www.bvi.org.uk)  
**Telephone: 0207 355 9570**



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