

# Discover the benefits of studying abroad

**UKCOSA**, the Council for International Education, offers comprehensive advice to students on studying abroad, including how to arrange visas, sources of funding and learning a new language

It has become relatively common for UK students to contemplate studying in another country as part of a UK degree (for instance on an Erasmus exchange, see [www.erasmus.ac.uk](http://www.erasmus.ac.uk) for further information). Taking an entire degree abroad is also possible, although sources of financial support may be harder to find, and the ease of application will vary enormously from country to country.

You will normally need to start researching possibilities 12-18 months in advance to allow sufficient time for making an application, completing any tests (including language tests) required, obtaining visas and finding funding.

## Visas and formalities

If you are an EU national you have a right to live and study in any other EU country on the same basis as nationals of that country, eg paying the same level of fees. General information about those rights, with some specific information about individual countries, is available on the European Union's Dialogue with Citizens and Business (<http://europa.eu.int/youreurope/>) or in the form of booklets and factsheets from the European Commission Offices in the UK (<http://www.cec.org.uk>).

Studying in non-EU countries may involve applying for a student visa, and you may find yourself subject to different procedures and regulations from the nationals of that country with respect to residence, permission to work, etc.

## What information is available

For information on a country's education system, contact its



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embassy or consulate in the UK, or the ministry of education in country. Some countries have separate organisations which provide information about studying in that country. Unlike the UK, few countries have centralised admissions systems. In most cases you will need to apply directly to the university at which you wish to study.

Information about Commonwealth universities is available from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (John Foster House, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1 0PF, United Kingdom, Tel: 020 7387 8572 Web: [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)). General information about studying elsewhere in the EU is available from the Dialogue with Citizens and Business ([www.citizens.eu.int](http://www.citizens.eu.int)) or the European Commission offices in the UK ([www.cec.org.uk](http://www.cec.org.uk)).

## Recognition of qualifications

Make sure that the degree that you take will be recognised in the country

where you intend to work afterwards, particularly where recognition is required from professional bodies or government. UK NARIC ([www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)) provides advice on how foreign qualifications are likely to be viewed within the UK. You will also need information about how your current qualifications will be viewed when applying for admission to foreign universities. In some cases, the equivalence of qualifications is decided by the state; in others, universities make their own judgements.

## Language and culture

Reflecting the growing predominance of English as a world language, there are many non-anglophone countries where some courses, or even whole degrees, are offered in English – especially at postgraduate level. Nevertheless, in most cases admission to a university will be dependent on your demonstrating an adequate

level of proficiency in the language of the host country, and you will normally need at least some knowledge of the language in day to day life. In many cases, pre-sessional language courses will be available, and are often useful to help with the process of acclimatising to the locality, culture and academic customs, as well as the language itself.

One of the benefits of studying in another culture will be the opportunity to learn about that culture, and develop skills of cross-cultural communication and awareness. The process of adapting to a new culture is challenging, and can be stressful. You may find the website [www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE\\_ISSUES\\_2.htm](http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/pub/CULTURE_ISSUES_2.htm) a helpful introduction to cultural adjustment issues.

You should also be aware that educational norms and values vary between cultures. For example, UK universities put a strong emphasis on independent study and critical thinking, whereas in other countries

study may be more closely directed by teachers and based around authorised set texts. Try to find out before applying about educational cultures in your destination country.

### Sources of funding

Enquire about sources of financial support from the relevant embassy, consulate or education office and from the universities to which you apply. Remember that competition for most scholarships is intense, and that it is usually necessary to apply a year or so in advance of the proposed date of admission. Most internationally mobile students have to fund their study from their own (or their family's) resources.

Do not assume you will be able to fund your studies by working during your degree. You will need to check whether and to what extent you are permitted to work in the country on a student visa, and also to check the availability of work. It may be a condition of entry that you are able to demonstrate your ability to support yourself (and any dependents).

### Support from UK sources

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) ([www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)) produces a guide to opportunities for Higher Education in Europe entitled "The European Choice" (although this is mainly aimed at students taking a degree in the UK and choosing to spend a year or less abroad as part of their degree). They will also be able to advise you whether there is any possibility of funding from UK government sources for study abroad.

A small number of grants are available from UK research councils and professional bodies for postgraduate study overseas. Contact the relevant body for your subject area to find out whether they offer anything suitable.

A small number of educational trusts and charities based in the UK may provide support for UK students studying overseas. In most cases these will only cover a small proportion of the costs involved, and funding from other sources will be needed. Information can be found in one of the directories of educational grant-making bodies.



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A new guide to a wide range of full-time courses in medicine and medically-related subjects throughout the EU... that you can study in English. Due for publication late Spring 2006

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