



UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

at Cheltenham and Gloucester

Guide for International Applicants 2011/12



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Welcome to the University of Gloucestershire

Congratulations on being offered a place to study at the University of Gloucestershire. You will be joining a diverse and friendly community of British and international students studying for a respected degree in one of the most attractive locations in the UK. We are confident that you will find the experience of studying with us and living in Gloucestershire both positive and memorable, whatever your chosen subject.

The International Development Centre is here to give support and advice to all our international students to enable them to excel in their academic work and make the most of their time here. If you have any questions you can email us at isa@glos.ac.uk, phone **+44 (0)1242 714300**, or come into the International Development Centre. In particular, please get in touch if you have any difficulties in applying for your visa.

We hope to see as many of you as possible during the International Welcome Week, where we will be helping students to settle into university life and providing detailed information about the important issues of immigration, banking, working during your studies, and studying in the UK.

We look forward to meeting you!

Charlotte Robinson
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The Team

Important Dates for International Students

11 September	Arrivals Day and First Day of International Welcome Week
12 September	House Hunting Event
13-14 September	Information Workshops
15 September	Enrolment Day
16 September	International Students' Trip to Cardiff
17 September	Skittles Evening
19 September	First Day of Academic Induction
26 September	First Day of Classes
7 October	End of Enrolment Period

Things to do Before You Leave Home

- 1 Book your place on the Welcome Week
- 2 Reserve your term time accommodation (please see enclosed literature) OR sign up for the House Hunting Event
- 3 Pay your tuition fees
- 4 Apply for your visa
- 5 Read through our online Pre-Arrival information at <http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/international/prearrival>
- 6 Book a space on our 'Meet & Greet' service, and book an air ticket accordingly
- 7 Take out insurance policies as required

The International Welcome Week

– Starts 11 September

We are very happy that you have chosen to study at the University of Gloucestershire and we want to make your time with us as enjoyable and fruitful as possible. Moving to a different country can be daunting and there will be lots of new things you will need to do and learn. Over the course of the Welcome Week we will help you to settle into university life. There will be special events to help you complete vital tasks such as finding accommodation, registering with the doctor, enrolling for your course, and most important of all – making friends!

Why should I attend the Welcome Week?

As an international student, you will need to know lots of information about living in the UK. During the Welcome Week you will have easy access to this information and will have the opportunity to get the necessary things done and out of the way before you start your course. There is also plenty of time to get to know other international students during social events, parties and trips. We find that students who attend the Welcome Week settle into university life more quickly and can therefore focus all their efforts into making their time here a success.

How can I book my place on the Welcome Week?

You need to book your place on the Welcome Week by emailing **internationalstudents@glos.ac.uk**. You can also make any enquiries by phoning **+44 (0)1242 714509**. Please tell us your name and student number. Details can be found at **<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/international/prearrival/welcome>**

How much does the Welcome Week cost?

Although the Welcome Week is heavily subsidised by the university, we do charge a small fee of £95.00 to help cover a few additional costs such as accommodation and trips.

What is included in the Welcome Week?

Trips, bedding, social events and all of the accommodation for Sunday through to Wednesday are included in the Welcome Week fee. The fee also includes all meals which from Sunday evening through to Friday morning (breakfast, lunch and dinner).

What about travelling to the university?

For students attending the Welcome Week, we provide a “Meet & Greet” service. This is a special, free-of-charge service for our new international students where we meet you at the airport and drive you to the university by coach. This service must be booked in advance and is only available from Heathrow Airport on 11 September 2011. Alternatively, you can book a private or shared taxi from any airport for an extra cost, or you can make your own way to the university via coach or train. For further details on all of these travel options, including the Meet & Greet service, please see the enclosed postcard. Further information can be found on the Pre-Arrival webpage.

USA



“The Welcome Week helped me to understand the educational processes of the university, how to register for classes, and helped me find my way around Cheltenham. I would have felt very lost without it. The seminars the International Office had on immigration regulations, laws and services the university offers were invaluable. I have utilised a lot of university services thanks to the information I received during Welcome Week.”

What about accommodation?

If you are an undergraduate and you have reserved accommodation in university halls of residence, you will be able to move into your allocated room on Sunday 11 September. All other students can book a room in the Park Villas from 11 - 14 September by signing up for Welcome Week (cost is included in the Welcome week charge). After this you will be given help to move into your term time accommodation. Students who will be moving into the university postgraduate flats will be able to move in early on Wednesday 14 September.

How do I join the House Hunting Event?

If you have not yet found accommodation, we strongly advise you to book a place on our House Hunting Event on Monday 12 September. During this event you will be given access to the university's list of registered housing in the private sector and there will be lots of help to phone landlords and look at properties. There will be plenty of time to meet potential flatmates on Sunday 11 September if you don't know anyone. You can also join our group on Facebook at www.facebook.com/uniofglosint for extra networking before you come. To book a place on the House Hunting Event, please email internationalstudents@glos.ac.uk.



Accommodation at The Park Campus

Nigeria




“Welcome Week equipped me with all the information needed to enjoy my studies at the University of Gloucestershire. I would strongly recommend the Welcome Week programme to new students because it provides orientation and, most importantly, helps you to build good relationships with staff and fellow new students.”

International Welcome Week Programme

Sunday 11 September	On the first day there will be a buffet meal and a welcome party with live music in the Students' Union. This will be the perfect chance to relax after your long journey and meet other students. There will also be tours of the campus and Cheltenham.
Monday 12 September	In the morning you will register for your welcome pack. This will be followed by the House Hunting Event for those who are seeking accommodation. If you have already sorted your accommodation there will be a treasure hunt around Cheltenham with prizes. In the evening there will be a traditional barn dance, which involves a live country band with a caller guiding you through the dances.
Tuesday 13 September	This is a day of helpful talks delivered by university staff on a range of topics, to help you settle into life in the UK. There will be presentations on Academic Life, Study Skills, Work, Laws and Driving. In the evening there will be a film showing in one of our theatres with snacks and refreshments.
Wednesday 14 September	This is "moving out" day, with the morning dedicated to helping you move into your new homes. Students who have pre-booked the university's postgraduate houses will be able to move in to their new accommodation on this date. In the afternoon there will be further presentations on topics including Immigration, Work, Life in the UK, Careers Advice and Student Services. In the evening there will be a quiz and games night with prizes.
Thursday 15 September Day trip to Cardiff	This is the day of the Enrolment Event, where we will be checking your educational certificates, passport and visa, and then taking you through the on-line enrolment process. You will be able to collect your ID card on this day. In the afternoon there will be an Information Fair where you will be able to learn more about various university services and also meet with staff from external organisations like banks and insurers.
Friday 16 September	On the Friday there will be a day trip to Cardiff, the capital of Wales. We have a boat and foot tour scheduled around the recently refurbished bay and the centre of the city. In the afternoon you will have time to look around the shops and then visit Cardiff Castle in the city centre.
Saturday 17 September	In the evening we will be going to a local pub to play the traditional countryside game of Skittles. Skittles is similar to bowling but on a smaller scale and usually played within teams. It's a unique game and lots of fun!

Malaysia



“Welcome Week allowed me to adjust and get the hang of what to expect before classes started. I didn’t feel the pressure to settle or worry about matters because everything had been mapped out for me and all I had to do was stick to the schedule that the staff had provided. In a matter of days I was confident enough to roam around and explore everything by myself!”

Enrolling for Your Course

– From Thursday 15 September

Enrolling for your course is a simple online process that only takes a few minutes to complete. However, before being given access to online enrolment, new international students must complete two very important stages – payment of your tuition fees and a visa and document check.

How do I pay my tuition fees?

You should make arrangements to pay your tuition fees before you come to the UK. International students have two options:

- You can pay the full amount before 15 September
- You can pay in two instalments – 50% before 15 September 2011 and 50% in January 2012

Please note: Students paying by instalments must open a bank account as soon as they arrive in the UK and provide the Tuition Fee Administrator intfeesadmin@glos.ac.uk with full account details by 7 October at the latest. You will receive the necessary documentation and help to open a bank account during the Welcome Week.



Municipal Buildings, Cheltenham

You can pay your tuition fees from your home country in the following ways:

By bank transfer directly to the university bank account

National Westminster Bank plc
P O Box 9
31 Promenade
CHELTENHAM
GL50 1LH

Account Name: University of Gloucestershire
Account Number: 24241350
Sort Code: 60-05-16
IBAN: GB92NWBK60051624241350
Swift Code: NWBK GB21 29X

*Please quote your name and student number on all remittances. Send a copy of the remittance receipt to **intfeesadmin@glos.ac.uk** or the address below.*

By bank draft or cheque in pounds sterling

Please make your bank draft/cheque payable to **University of Gloucestershire**. Write your name and student number on the back, and send by secure post to:

Tuition Fee Administrator
Waterworth Building
University of Gloucestershire
The Park, Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 2RH
United Kingdom

You can also bring your bank draft with you and pay it directly to the Tuition Fee Administrator on 15 September. Please do not bring a cheque to the UK as this might not clear within the enrolment period.

By credit/debit card

- Phone the Income Team on **+44 (0) 1242 714222** to make your payment OR
- Make your payment online at **<https://www.ecommercegateway.co.uk/glos>**

You will need to quote your name and student number to make the payment. Please note that it can sometimes be difficult to make payments online from overseas so you might prefer to pay by bank transfer.

How do I get my visa and documents checked?

International students should attend the Enrolment Event on Thursday 15 September at Park Campus. On this day staff from the International Development Centre will check you have a valid visa to study in the UK and also check the original education certificates you sent with your application. You should bring your passport, visa, and education certificates to this event.

Once you have paid your tuition fees and completed the document check you will be given help to enrol online. New international students will not be able to enrol before 15 September.

If you arrive in the UK after 15 September, you will need to go to the International Development Centre on Park Campus to show your passport, visa, and education certificates. You will not be able to enrol until you have done this.

****Please note that international students must have completed online enrolment by 7 October. All students on a Tier 4 student visa who are not enrolled by this date will be reported to the UK Border Agency and will not be permitted to start their course. This is a legal requirement of the UK immigration rules.****

Applying for Your Visa

If you are not an EEA or Swiss national, you must apply for 'entry clearance' (a visa) before you leave your home country. It is very important that you do not enter the UK as a visitor as you will not be able to switch visa categories once you are here, and you will not be permitted to start your course.

The UK government operates a points based immigration system, commonly referred to as 'PBS'. This system has five visa categories, or 'tiers', and the student category is called 'Tier 4'. International students should apply for their visa under Tier 4 using the CAS number provided in their university unconditional offer letter. This is a unique reference number generated for you by the university and the UK Border Agency, and it contains all the information relevant to you and your course. It also contains the details of your application and the key documents we used when we accepted you for study. You will need to provide these documents to the British Embassy or High Commission along with your visa application.

Under Tier 4 you must score 40 points in order to be granted your visa. 30 points are available for the CAS number the university gives you and the key documents listed in it. 10 points are available for evidence that you have enough funds to cover your tuition fees and living costs. You will need to show that you, or your parents, have held this money in your bank account for a consecutive 28 day period. The exact criteria for scoring the necessary points are subject to change and so are not given in this booklet. You should make sure that you have read the UK Border Agency's Tier 4 Visa Application Guide AND the Tier 4 Policy Guidance for the most up-to-date information before you apply for your visa (see below). Another helpful guide is published by UKCISA at www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/applying_home_country.php

If you require help from the International Development Centre, please email isa@glos.ac.uk or phone **+44 (0) 1242 714300**.

Please note that the university is legally obliged to monitor all Tier 4 students' attendance and engagement with study and report any unsatisfactory behaviour to UKBA. We must also keep a copy of each student's valid passport and visa and keep their up-to-date contact details. You will be given more information about this at the immigration workshop at the International Welcome Week.

The visa application process

1. Read the UK Border Agency's Tier 4 Visa Application Guide which can be accessed at: **www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/infos/inf29pbsstudent**. This leaflet contains answers to frequently asked questions about the application process and links to a number of important documents. You should print the following documents from the leaflet:

 - Tier 4 Guidance
 - Application form VAF9 – PBS Migrant
 - PBS Migrant guidance notes
 - PBS Appendix 8 (General) Student
2. Find your country on the list at: **www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretosapply**. Read the information about how to apply for a UK student visa in your country. The application process can be very different, depending on which country you apply from. Find out how long it takes to process applications and make sure you apply with plenty of time, so that you do not miss the Welcome Week.
3. Read through the whole of the Policy Guidance and other documents very carefully. They contain a lot of very detailed information about how to complete the application forms and what documents you need to provide. It is very important that you submit all the documents required. If your documents do not exactly match the requirements set out in the Policy Guidance, your application will be refused.
4. Complete application form VAF9 and PBS Appendix 8. The forms ask how many 'points' you are claiming. You need to claim:

 - 30 points for attributes/possession of a CAS
 - 10 points for maintenance

Submit the two forms and the necessary supporting documents using the process for your country. We recommend that you keep a photocopy of your completed application and all submitted documents, including your passport. After you have submitted your application, you will be invited to attend an office to give your fingerprints and have your photograph taken. Giving this biometric information is compulsory for all international students coming to the UK.
5. When you get your visa, it is essential that you check it carefully to ensure that:

 - your name and date of birth are correct
 - it says you are a Tier 4 student
 - it starts on or before the date you want to travel to the UK
 - it does not end sooner than expected

If any of these details are incorrect, then you should ask to have the visa amended before you travel. It is very difficult to make changes after you travel.

What documents do I need to make my visa application?

All students need to supply the following documents:

- Current passport and any other passport you have used to travel to the UK
- CAS number

Most students need to supply the following documents*:

- Education certificates and evidence of English language proficiency, as listed on your CAS
- Financial evidence showing you have money to pay outstanding tuition fees plus £5,400, held in your bank account for at least 28 days. If you use evidence of your parent's funds, you must also supply a letter of consent and your birth certificate. Please read the Tier 4 Policy Guidance for full details of the required document format.

In addition, students making their visa applications in the following countries will need to get a certificate confirming that they are free from infectious Tuberculosis (TB): Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sudan, Thailand. Please carry a copy of this certificate to show at the border when you travel to the UK.

*nationals of the following countries might not need to supply education certificates or financial evidence. Please check the Policy Guidance for the latest information: Argentina, Australia, British National Overseas, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, USA.

When will my visa start?

All students applying for undergraduate and postgraduate taught degree programmes, PhD study, or pre-sessional courses should receive entry clearance starting one month before the beginning of their course.

When will my visa end?

This depends on the type and length of your course:

- Four months after the end of your course if your course lasts 12 months or more.
- Two months after the end of your course if your course lasts between 6 - 12 months.
- One month after the end of your course if your course is a pre-sessional course of less than 6 months.
- Seven days after the end of your course if your course is less than 6 months long and is not a pre-sessional course.

Can I bring my family with me?

If you are a postgraduate student and your course is longer than 12 months, you can bring your family with you. If you are studying a course at undergraduate level or below then you are not allowed to bring your dependents for the full length of the course, although they can come and visit you for up to six months. Please contact the International Development Centre if you would like advice about dependant applications.

If your visa application is refused, please contact the International Development Centre on isa@glos.ac.uk / +44 (0) 1242 714300 for advice and a new CAS number. You must not use the same CAS number in a new application, as this will be refused again.

Insurance

Before leaving home you should:

- Insure yourself and your belongings for the journey to the UK
- Consider taking out a medical insurance policy and/or any further cover as required

Travel insurance

At an absolute minimum you should insure yourself and your belongings for the journey to the UK. This can usually be done through your travel agent, or alternatively through direct contact with a private insurance company in your home country.

We recommend that you do not bring very expensive items with you, such as jewellery. If you do wish to bring expensive items, you should make sure you take out extra insurance to cover their cost in the event that they are lost or stolen.

It is good practice to keep a copy of your insurance policy and claim numbers separate to both your main and hand luggage in case these items are lost or stolen. For example, you may wish to keep details of your insurance electronically, or leave full details with a family member or friend.

Medical insurance

If your course of study lasts for more than six months, you will be entitled to free treatment on the UK's National Health Service (NHS) from the start of your stay. This includes free visits to the local doctor, free treatment in hospital, and paying a standard cost for prescriptions (medicine which your doctor says you need) and dental treatment.

If your course of study is under six months you will not be entitled to free NHS treatment, and should make sure you take out adequate medical insurance to cover medical costs if you fall ill, and also to cover the additional possible costs resulting from illness.

These can be substantial, and include:

- lost fees if you are unable to complete your course;
- costs of a relative visiting you in the UK if you fall ill;
- cost of returning to your home country for treatment;
- or in the worst possible situation, returning a body home for burial.

Even if you are entitled to free NHS treatment while in the UK, you should consider taking out insurance which covers the above additional costs.

If you already have medical insurance in your home country, check whether you can extend it to cover your stay in the UK, as well as looking at options available from UK insurers. Endsleigh Insurance have produced a special health insurance policy for international students and their spouses or civil partners and children in the UK. Details of the policy can be found on the Endsleigh website at www.endsleigh.co.uk

Pre-sessional students

- If you have been issued with a CAS that covers both your **pre-sessional course and your main course**, you will be entitled to free NHS treatment from the start of your stay.
- If you have been issued with a CAS that covers your **pre-sessional course only**, please note that you will not be eligible for free NHS treatment until you have passed the pre-sessional course and enrolled on your main course. As a consequence, you should ensure that you take out medical insurance to cover, at a minimum, the period of your pre-sessional course.

Frequently Asked Questions

What support services are available for international students?

The university has three *International Student Advisers* who can provide comprehensive advice on a range of issues such as immigration, banking and finance, and living in the UK. There is also an *International Accommodation Support Adviser* who can provide assistance with any accommodation queries you may have before or after you arrive. In addition, there is a "Helpzone" on each university campus which acts as a one-stop-shop for all students to get advice about anything that might be troubling them.

Is there anything I can do in advance to prepare for my course?

If you would like to prepare yourself for academic study in the UK before you come, a great resource is www.prepareforsuccess.org.uk. This website helps you find out what UK academic life is like and what kind of skills you will need for effective study here. The website has been specially designed for international students, with interactive activities on a range of topics including "Listening to lectures", "Your relationship with your tutors", and "Preparing for course work and exams".

How can I improve my academic English before I start my course?

The Cheltenham International Language Centre (CILC), based at the university, offers pre-sessional English courses through the summer for international students starting their degree programme in September. For more information, see <http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/cilc>

Can I work during my studies?

Most international students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during their course*. More information about the right to work, finding a job, and applying for a work visa after your studies will be given at the

'Working in the UK' workshop taking place during the Welcome Week.

Will I be able to start my course late?

All students must have enrolled and started their course by 7 October. International students who have not arrived by this date will not be permitted to join their course and their visa will be cancelled. If you have serious difficulties arriving within this period please contact the International Development Centre at isa@glos.ac.uk / **+44 (0) 1242 714300** to see if there is anything we can do to help.

Where can I find further information?

Please be sure to have a look at our Pre-arrival webpages, available at <http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/international/prearrival>. These pages have been specially developed for international students and have information on immigration, travelling to the UK, International Welcome Week, studying at the university, and general information about living in the UK.

You should also check out our page on Facebook for international students at the University of Gloucestershire. Please join our page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/uniofglosint

Further information of relevance to international students can be found on the following external websites:

The UK Council for International Student Affairs: www.ukcisa.org.uk

UK Border Agency: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk

Tourist information: www.visitcheltenham.com and www.gloucester.gov.uk/tourism and www.visitbritain.com

*Please note that work entitlements for international students are under constant review by the UK Border Agency, and therefore liable to change at short notice.



