



# A practical and cultural guide for international students in the UK

Anthony Cutler and Jill Doubleday





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## Welcome!

How much do you know about life in the UK? Go to [www.kestrelconnect.co.uk](http://www.kestrelconnect.co.uk) and view the Cultural Awareness pages.

It is not always easy to be a foreigner in another country. For example, Americans speak the same language as the British and watch UK films and TV programmes. However, even Americans can be confused by British customs, behaviour and use of language.

You may spend a lot of time with a host family or in a student residence. If you stay with a host family you can learn a lot from them. In a student residence you can become lifelong friends with students from other countries. It's important to be open to the possibilities. Chapter 3 will give you some ideas on how to make your stay as pleasant and rewarding as possible.

Educational culture is different in every country. In British education, teachers expect students aged 16+ to be independent and self-motivated learners. Chapter 6 explains what this means in practice and how you can make the most of your time in the classroom or other learning environments.

Meeting people and making friends is not always easy, especially when you're from another country. Chapter 7 explains how this works in Britain, and suggests ways for you to enjoy your free time.

Being a student abroad is not just about studying, but about personal development. Kestrel Connect is designed to help you make all sorts of discoveries about the UK and about yourself.

If you are a university undergraduate or graduate, this help also extends to professional development. Kestrel Connect makes connections for international students with selected employers offering work experience or employment (for those allowed to work in the UK).

If you'd like to connect with other international students to gain information and insight from their experiences, you can try Kestrel Café, the independent forum available on the Kestrel Connect website.

For more information and inspiration go to [www.kestrelconnect.co.uk](http://www.kestrelconnect.co.uk).

We hope you enjoy your stay in the UK and return home with many fond memories.

Anthony Cutler and Jill Doubleday

**'America and Britain are two countries divided by the same language.'**

*George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright and co-founder of the London School of Economics*



# 1 Taking Off

## Before you leave, think!

Ask and answer these important questions before you leave for the UK.

- Is my passport valid?
- Do I have all the documents I need? (See Home Office Tier 4 guidance doc.\*)
- Have I got my valid Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) document?
- Have I arranged somewhere to stay?
- Do I have enough money for my time in the UK?
- Can I prove to the UK authorities that I have enough money for my stay?
- Do I have all necessary addresses and telephone numbers for when I arrive in the UK?
- Do I have the telephone number of my country's Embassy in the UK?
- Do I know how to get to my institution and accommodation when I arrive?
- Do I have enough money to reach my destination after touching down?
- Have I told my host family/residence and the institution about my travel arrangements and arrival times?
- Do I have travel insurance?

\*<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/Tier4migrantguidance.pdf>





## 2 Touching Down

If you are from a European Union country you should not have to answer many questions at the Immigration desk when you arrive. But if you are from another part of the world this is your first chance to practise your English in the UK.

When you answer Immigration Officers' questions it is important to be clear and to tell the truth. Make sure you have these documents to show to the officers:

- Your passport with the visas you need.
- Your Confirmation of Acceptance (CAS) from your school, college or university.
- Any documents from your bank to show that you have enough money for your stay in the UK.

Try to speak clearly and slowly. Be polite, and don't worry!

Here are some key questions that Immigration Officers usually ask. Notice that they could ask the same question in different ways. Practise your answers.

What is your name?  
What's your name?  
What's your first name?  
What's your family name?  
What is your last name?

What is your date of birth?  
When were you born?

How long are you staying?  
How long do you intend to stay?

What is the purpose of your visit?  
Why are you here?

Have you got a Confirmation of Acceptance from the school/college?  
Do you have a CAS from the school/college?

Have you paid the school fees?  
Are your school fees paid?  
Have you paid a deposit?

Have you got a return ticket?  
Do you have a return ticket?

Where will you stay?  
Where are you staying?  
What's your address in the UK?  
Is this your first visit to the UK?  
Have you been to the UK before?

Will you be working in the UK?  
Do you intend to work in the UK?  
Are you planning to get a job here?

Have you got enough money to live on?  
Do you have enough funds for your stay?

For more on immigration see the Important Information section.

## 2 Touching Down



### Language tip

All languages have words and expressions that show politeness and respect. British people use 'please', 'thank you' and 'thanks'. It doesn't matter if you are speaking to someone younger or older than you. In the UK it is important to be polite and show respect to everyone you meet. The Immigration Officer may say 'thank you' when you give him or her a document. Say 'thank you' when the officer gives it back. English speakers usually add please, thank you or thanks when they accept or refuse an offer. Would you like a drink? Yes, please./No, thanks. Just saying 'yes' or 'no' sounds rude to native English speakers in Britain.

### Study tip

It is a good idea to make a record of your stay in the UK. Buy a notebook or create a computer file where you can write down all the things that are strange or interesting in some way. Watch what people do in different situations. Is it similar or not to the way people behave in your country? Write down any common words or phrases that people use when they speak to each other. You can then ask your British friends, host family or teachers when and why people use these expressions in these situations.



You can also become a member of the Kestrel Café online forum where international students discuss these matters or visit the Cultural Awareness pages at [www.kestrelconnect.co.uk](http://www.kestrelconnect.co.uk).



For access to the entire document and all other Kestrel Connect services become a lifelong member now:

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