



Pre-arrival guide for international students
2023-24

Contents

What to pack if you are travelling from outside the UK	3
Things to do between now and your September Registration at the RAU	4
Vaccinations	5
International students	5
Paying your tuition fees-students from outside the UK	6
Registration	7
Arriving in the UK – Immigration.....	8
Customs Control	9
Using public transport to travel to the RAU	10
Buses and Coaches in the UK	10
Trains in the UK	10
Travelling from Heathrow Airport	11
Travelling from Gatwick Airport.....	11
Taxis from Cirencester or Kemble Station to the RAU	11
Arriving at the RAU	12
How to find private rented accommodation	12
Opening a UK bank account	12
Collecting your visa in the UK.....	13
Police Registration	13
Healthcare	14
Student Route Visa Students.....	14
Bank Holidays	14
Video links	14
Pre-arrival checklist.....	15



What to pack if you are travelling from outside the UK

Documentation

- Carry the below in your hand luggage in case hold luggage is late or lost:
- Passport
- Visa & entry clearance documents
- Your offer letter
- Proof of degree (final transcript, certificate)
- Scholarship/funding information documents
- Travel and health insurance documents
- Cash-traveller's cheques-credit cards
- Contact details and directions for your accommodation

Clothing

The weather in the UK is changeable. Temperatures may go down as low as -3 degrees Celsius during the winter (Dec-March) and as high as 32 degrees during the summer (June-Aug). Rainfall is common but most of the time is light.

If you arrive in September we suggest you bring a sweater and a light (waterproof) jacket or a small umbrella for the journey. A pair of comfortable waterproof shoes is also recommended. Agriculture and Equine students are advised to have a pair of wellington boots.

N.B. Please ensure that you also have face-masks that you can use when you board public transport or entering shops.

There is no particular dress code. In general students tend to dress informally (jeans, T-shirt, trainers) whilst on campus. Smart clothes are occasionally worn either for recruitment events with employers or on social events such as the Christmas and the May ball.

Electrical appliances

Electricity in the UK operates on 220-240 volts. You should check your appliance manual to ensure it will work in the UK. You will also require a three pin plug adaptor which is available in most shops.

Mobile phone

Check with your home service provider before you travel to the UK. It may be expensive to make calls in the UK and back home from your current phone. Pay as you go phones can be bought for as little as £5 although individual call and text charges may be comparatively higher. Pre-pay phones do not require a UK bank account or address so they may be easier to buy if you are waiting to open a bank account. Do shop around to get the best deal before you decide!



Things to do between now and your September Registration at the RAU

September	Get vaccinated. All students – British, European or overseas – admitted to UK universities are advised to be vaccinated against Meningitis C and to ensure all their vaccinations are up-to-date. Agricultural students are also advised to arrange Tetanus immunisation.
Before you arrive in the UK (overseas students)	Obtain sufficient UK currency or an international credit/debit card to cover you until you open a UK bank account
	Ensure that you pay your fees (self-funded students) or that you have a payment plan organised. You cannot complete your registration unless this is completed.
48 hours before you travel	Check if you need to provide your journey and contact details 48 hours before you travel. Please visit the government website here: https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk
Week commencing 11 September	International Orientation-details to be finalised as to the format and precise dates
18-22 September	Student Registration & Induction Registration – Induction Week starts
October	Update your UK term time address on the RAU Student portal



Vaccinations

Students should be vaccinated against certain diseases before they start their course at the University.

The UK Government's Department of Health recommends the following types of vaccination:

- meningitis (MenACWY)
- diphtheria
- measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- polio
- tetanus

Please check with your doctor as the list may change. The RAU strongly advises students being immunized before the start of their course.

[COVID 19 – for up-to-date travel information to the UK please visit the government website here](#)

International students

If you are not a UK national you should be vaccinated for all of the diseases listed above.

You should also be vaccinated for tuberculosis (TB) before you enter the UK.

If you are applying for a Student visa, depending on your country of origin/residence, you may also need to be tested for tuberculosis.

Ask your doctor about any other vaccinations you might need to travel to the UK. Also, check with your local embassy to find out if you are legally required to get any vaccines before coming to the UK.

We strongly recommend you get your vaccinations before you leave your home country. If you get your vaccinations in the UK, you may have to pay for some of them.

If you have evidence of your vaccinations (e.g. International Vaccination Book) bring it with you when you enter the country and during your medical registration at the RAU.



Paying your tuition fees - students from outside the UK

The amount you need to pay for your tuition fees is stated in your offer letter. The figure given to you is for your first year of your studies for undergraduate or Doctorate courses (FdSc, BSc, PhD) and the total fee if you are studying towards a taught or research masters course (MSc, MBA, MSc by Research).

Your tuition fees are payable in advance in two instalments. An initial deposit of £2,000 is payable on acceptance of an offer of a place at the RAU. This is payable by 1 August. The balancing amount is then payable in two 50% instalments. The first payment is due before the start of semester 1 (12 September 2023) and then second payment due before the start of semester 2 (23 January 2024).

To complete your enrolment you must pay your fees as indicated above **before** you arrive for your registration. Ideally, you can do this when you complete the online self-registration. Login to [MyRAU](#).

The latest arrival and registration date is 9 October 2023.





Registration

To complete your formal enrolment at the RAU you must complete the online self-registration, upload a passport size photo and pay your fees. Once you have completed these steps you will be registered by the central administration.

Registry will e-mail you with information as to when the portal will be open for self-registration.

Registration is a straightforward process if you have completed your online self-registration and paid your fees and involves you providing proof of your identity and eligibility to study in the UK.

You will be issued with your RAU Unicard, which will confirm your status as a registered RAU student and allow you to use restricted access buildings, such as the Library. Induction and registration takes place during the Welcome week starting Monday 18 September 2023.

Late arrival for registration must be notified in writing to admissions@rau.ac.uk for new students and registry@rau.ac.uk for returning students as early as possible. Please provide your student ID your full name and briefly state the reason you will be arriving late for your registration. If your arrival is delayed and you

are on a Student visa please ensure that you also email visas@rau.ac.uk.

Documents to bring with you

For UK nationals and EEA nationals with settled/pre-settled status

Photo identification that verifies your nationality, such as your passport or national identity card. Please note that the University is required to take a copy of your documents at registration. EEA Nationals will need to provide the share code that shows the pre-settled/Settled status in the UK

For Overseas nationals (including EU/EEA without settled/pre-settled status) entering the UK with a student visa

Your passport showing evidence of your right to study at the RAU and the period for which you have permission to remain in the UK. Please note that the University is required to take a copy of your documents once you have collected your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP – The BRP is essentially your Student visa. From 2023 student visas are expected to be electronic). You will need to provide the share code to verify your visa status.

*N.B. We will send you specific communications about the right to study checks



Arriving in the UK – Immigration

Please remember when you travel to the UK to bring in your hand luggage all the important documents and information you need.

Have the following numbers handy in your pocket for use in an emergency, for example if you are prevented from entering through immigration or your flight is delayed for several hours:

Porters Lodge +44 (0)1285 652531 (ext. 2200)
or Security +44 (0)7960 031821

If you travel by plane you will probably arrive at one of London's main international airports:

Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted.

When you arrive at the UK port or airport you will find that there are two queues for passport control. One for European Economic Area (EEA & Swiss) nationals and the other for non-EEA nationals.

You will first have to show your passport and entry clearance (visa), if you have one, to an Immigration Officer. When you arrive in the UK, your passport will be checked along with your documents and you may be asked a few questions as you pass through immigration.

If you have a visa, then be prepared to answer a few questions about yourself and your

plans/intentions after completing your course. The expected questions are similar to the ones in the BIPF form we asked you to complete when we were preparing your Visa application. Have in your bag the bank statement/financial sponsor letter you used in your visa application and your offer letter from the University. When the Immigration Officer has checked your documents, and is satisfied that you are a genuine student, you will get a stamp in your passport (visa holders only) and will be allowed to pass through to customs.

Please check that **your passport has been stamped before leaving the desk** as sometimes immigration officers may forget to do that and it can cause problems later on.



Customs Control

When you collect your luggage you will have to join a queue for clearance through customs. If you have nothing to declare it will be a green channel, if you have goods to declare the red. The blue channel (previously used for arrivals from EEA countries) has closed. All passengers arriving from the EU are required to make a customs declaration by selecting the green channel (nothing to declare) or the red channel (goods to declare).

Please note if you are travelling to the UK and you are carrying 10,000 Euros or more in cash, bankers draft or cheque of any kind (about £8500 in pounds sterling or the equivalent in other currencies) you will be required to declare this at customs. Please go to the government website to complete the required form:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/import-and-export-cash-declaration-c9011>

You can make a cash declaration online up to 72 hours before you travel.

The authorities warn that you may face a penalty of up to £5,000 if you fail to declare the cash or you provide incorrect information.

Please ensure that you comply with the permitted duty-free allowances. If you do and/or you carry any prohibited goods you must declare them by going through the red channel.

Please visit the government website <https://www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods> or contact the British Embassy or High Commission in your country to find out what you are allowed to bring in the UK before travelling.

Remember: avoid any involvement with drugs, never agree to carry anything into the UK for a third party and never leave your luggage unattended.



Using public transport to travel to the RAU

Public transport in the UK is of a high standard, but can be expensive. Buses or coaches are less expensive than trains but you may have a longer journey time. Taxis are plentiful and convenient but are very expensive. A taxi from Heathrow to the RAU would cost typically about £110 and from Gatwick Airport approx. £150.

Buses and Coaches in the UK

Visit: www.nationalexpress.com for information and to buy a ticket online.

- The cost from Heathrow Airport to Cirencester for a single ticket is approx. £12-£40 and the journey time is approx. 1.30-2 hours
- From Gatwick Airport to Cirencester a single ticket costs approx. £20-£57 and the journey time is approx. 3.30-5 hours depending on the service.
- From Stansted costs vary between £14-40 and travel time may be between 3.30-5 hours depending on the service.

N.B. [Ticket prices and length of travelling may vary depending on the service you choose.](#)
[The above are indicative only.](#)

Follow the signs to Central Coach Station.

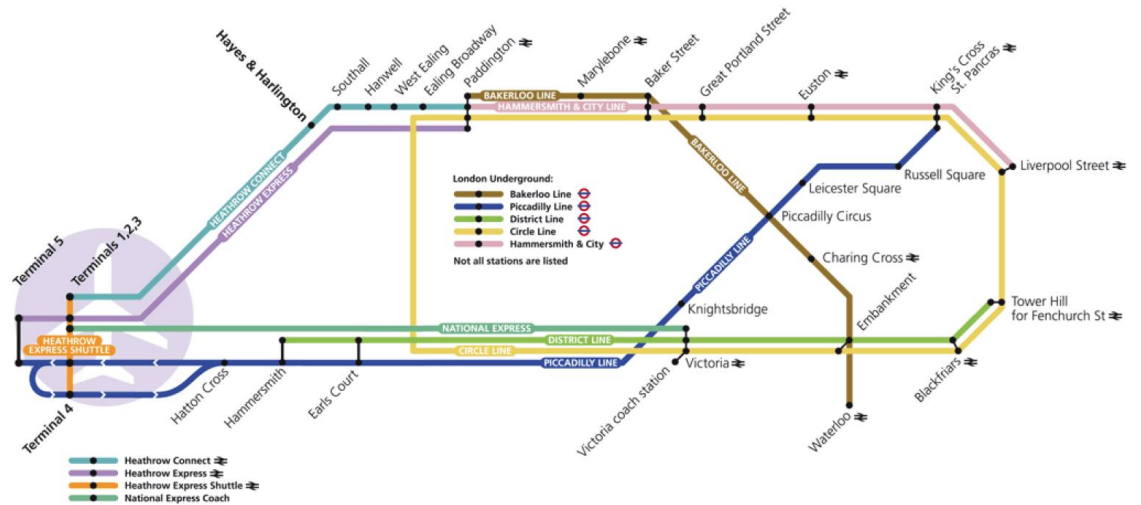
Trains in the UK

Visit: www.nationalrail.co.uk

If you arrive at Heathrow or Gatwick you will need to travel into Central London first by train, cross London by Underground or by train (Heathrow Express) and then change again onto another train.

There are frequent British Rail services from London (**Paddington**) to **Kemble Station** (Cirencester), via Swindon. There are also regular trains from Gloucester and Cheltenham, which connect to the main train lines.

A taxi and bus service is available to transport you the remaining three miles from Kemble Station to the University.



Travelling from Heathrow Airport

Heathrow Express and Train

Follow signs for the Heathrow Express.

From Heathrow, you take the Heathrow Express into central London to Paddington Station. There you can catch a train to Kemble station.

Underground and train

Alternatively, you may choose to take the Underground (Piccadilly Line – Eastbound and then Bakerloo Line-Northbound) from Heathrow Airport to Piccadilly Circus station and then change to Bakerloo line from Piccadilly Circus to Paddington.

Travelling from Gatwick Airport

Coach

Follow the signs to the coach station. National Express operates a coach service from Gatwick Airport to Cirencester via Heathrow Airport.

Train

Follow the signs for the main line station and buy a single ticket to Kemble.

The journey may take between 2.30-3.00hours. Ticket prices vary depending on the time of the day you travel.

TAXIS from Cirencester or Kemble Station to the RAU:

Cirencester Radio Cars: 01285 650850

Kemble Train Station Taxi Service: 0333 8000750 from approx. £11.



Arriving at the RAU

If you arrive during working hours make your way to the Porters Lodge and ask for someone at the Admissions Office. If you arrive after hours and you have booked accommodation on campus please make your way to the Porter's lodge (see campus [map](#))

How to find private rented accommodation

Please visit **Urban Fox** to get useful information on off campus accommodation and look at the properties currently available. Also, talk to current students to find out where they are living and what are the best areas and most accessible to the University and town centre.

Opening a UK bank account

Opening a UK bank account is by far the safest and most effective way of managing your money as an international student. Keep the following points in mind:

- Banks in the UK follow their own rules and identity checks which are completely separate from RAU. In order to keep your money safe, banks are very restricted in the ways they communicate with customers and in terms of their processes. This means that you need to attend a bank in person, meet with one of their advisors and

sometimes complete a paper application form in order to open a bank account.

- You may need to visit the bank more than once to set up your account, and once you have set up the account, you may have to wait around 10 days for your bank card to arrive.
- RAU has no influence over the types of accounts banks offer to students, the documentation they require or any other of their processes. We don't recommend any specific banks and it is up to you to decide which bank you would like to open an account with.
- If you are on a programme of 6 months or less, it may not be possible to open a bank account in the UK unless you hold a foreign government scholarship.
- You will need to **obtain a student status letter** from the Student Hub before you can open a UK Bank account. To request a letter for this purpose write to **registry@rau.ac.uk** stating which bank you want a letter for as the content of the letter may vary.

With this in mind, it is important that you bring sufficient funds to cover initial expenses for your first month in the UK. For safety reasons, it is not a good idea to bring large sums of cash; look for alternative options such as using Travelers Cheques or pre-paid cash cards and paying tuition fees online.



Collecting your visa in the UK

Student route visa students have a temporary 3 month visa vignette in their passport.

Once you arrive in the UK you will have to collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) within 10 days from arriving to the UK.

For RAU students this will be either the **RAU Admissions & Visa Compliance office** and for some the Swindon Post Office. If you have to collect your BRP from the post office the RAU Admissions & Visa Compliance office will provide you with information on how to reach the appointed post office.

If you collect your BRP from the Post Office please ensure that you bring it to the **RAU Admissions & Visa Compliance office** as we need to take a copy of this and update your student record. If you notice that any of the details on it are incorrect, please let the RAU Admissions & Visa Compliance office know so that we can contact the Home Office to do the required corrections and provide you with a new BRP.

NB: there are expected changes to the BRPs from September 2023 and these may change to eVisas. Pending updates from the UKVI regarding the new documentation scheme.



Healthcare

The National Health Service (NHS) is the UK's state healthcare system providing a wide range of health care services including appointments with a doctor, hospital treatment and dental care.

Students are expected to register with the RAU health centre unless you are already registered with another local doctor. Medical cover at the university health centre is provided by the Phoenix Surgery in Chesterton Lane. More information can be found **here**.

Student Visa students

Students on a Student Visa coming to the UK for more than 6 months would have paid the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as part of their visa application fee. This entitles students to access the NHS services free of charge in the same way as a permanent UK resident. This includes the Doctor's surgery, university health centre or a hospital. You may need to pay for dental and eye/optical treatment as well as for any medicine prescribed. Pharmacy prescriptions carry a standard charge.

Students from Australia and New Zealand are exempt from the IHS and will be able to access the NHS services free of charge during their studies in the UK.

EEA Nationals should read the advice on the UKCISA website here:
<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/EU-EEA--Swiss-Students/Healthcare-in-the-UK-for-EU-EEA-and-Swiss-students>

Courses less than 6 months

If your course is for less than 6 months you are advised to take out medical insurance as you will be liable for healthcare charges you receive in the UK except in a medical emergency and this is limited. Some countries may have reciprocal agreements with the UK but you should obtain information from the health authorities in your country before you travel.

Bank Holidays

Public holidays in the UK are known as "bank holidays". On these days banks, offices and many shops are closed and public transport is limited. A full list of the UK's national holidays can be found here: **www.gov.uk/bank-holidays**

Video links

<http://www.rau.ac.uk/the-rau/film-gallery>



Pre-arrival checklist

<p>Travelling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan your onward journey to the RAU and Cirencester. Submit the required form with contact and journey details on the government website 48 hours before travelling. Remember to check if you need to submit a PLF form 48 hours before travel <input type="checkbox"/> Check baggage restrictions on your flight <input type="checkbox"/> Check on any restrictions on goods that can be brought into the UK www.gov.uk/duty-free-goods/banned-and-restricted-goods <input type="checkbox"/> Consider Travel Insurance
<p>Finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Think of how much money you will need to bring to the UK and / or whether to use Travelers Cheques. Ask for money in £5, £10 and £20 notes as £50 may not be accepted for smaller transactions <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure you have enough money in cash/credit card to cover your expenses until you open a UK bank account <input type="checkbox"/> Check to see if your bankcard(if applicable) can be used in the UK and whether your bank can advise how to transfer money to the UK
<p>Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If you receive medical treatment and / or medication for a condition, get a letter from your doctor in your home country (in English) with the details as it may be useful for your new doctor in the UK. Check whether you can take your medication on your flight and through customs
<p>Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review your course handbooks <input type="checkbox"/> Look at the induction information available on the student portal from early September
<p>Living in the UK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Think if you need to bring an adaptor for any electrical equipment you are bringing to the UK <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the UK weather and plan what you need to pack <input type="checkbox"/> Bring passport photos as you will need them for various things
<p>Immigration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Check the details of your visa vignette and decision letter <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure you travel to the UK within the dates stated in your entry vignette and by the latest arrival date stated in your CAS <input type="checkbox"/> Make copies of your passport and visa and keep them somewhere safe <input type="checkbox"/> Carry a copy of your offer letter, the bank statement/financial sponsor letter you used to apply for your visa <input type="checkbox"/> Collect your BRP promptly on arrival in the UK (PENDING UPDATE)