



International Student Support

Working or Volunteering in the UK

Working and/or volunteering part-time can help you to gain valuable experience whilst in the UK. Before entering into any part-time employment or voluntary work, you must consider how this extra commitment will affect your studies and you should not depend on income from a part-time job to support you.

Most international students are allowed to do some part-time work or volunteering whilst studying. However, this is not true for every student and there are restrictions as to the number of hours and the type of work/volunteering you are allowed to do.

Working during your studies

EEA and Swiss nationals

EEA and Swiss nationals have the right to live in the UK and work or volunteer without a work permit. The EEA countries are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden. However, please do keep checking our [website](#) or the [UKCISA website](#) for the latest information on Brexit and how this may affect you.

Students from outside the European Economic Area

Students on **short-term student visas** are not allowed to work in the UK, either paid or unpaid. Students on **Tier 4 (General) student visas** are usually eligible to work a limited number of hours per week during term time and full time during vacation periods. You must check the conditions of your visa regarding work. To be allowed to work, the condition must be "restricted" rather than "prohibited." If you have conditions which prohibit you from working, it is illegal for you to work in the UK, either paid or unpaid.

UK Visas and Immigration treat working in breach of your conditions very seriously. If you work too many hours or undertake work which you do not have permission for, future immigration applications may be refused or you may be removed from the UK.

This leaflet is produced by:

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NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY 

Check your visa carefully

You are allowed to work if it says one of the following:

- Work (and any changes) must be authorised
- Able to work as authorised by the Secretary of State
- Work as in Tier 4 Rules
- Restricted Work. P/T term time. F/T vacations
- Restricted work term time
- Work 20 hrs max in term-time
- Work 10 hrs max in term-time

You cannot work if your visa says:

- No work
- Work prohibited

If you have a Tier 4 Student Visa and have been given a prohibition on working, a mistake may have been made. You are advised to contact the International Student Support Service.

Your visa must be in your current passport or on a BRP card

When providing your visa as evidence of your eligibility to work to a new employer, your visa must be contained either within your current passport or on a BRP card. Therefore, if you have renewed your passport and have kept your valid visa inside your old passport, you will need to transfer your visa to a BRP card. See here for more information on this process: gov.uk/transfer-visa

What kind of work can I do?

You can do most kinds of work, but you must not:

- be self-employed
- be employed as a professional sports person or sports coach
- be employed as an entertainer
- take a permanent full-time job

How many hours can I work each week?

Most students with a Tier 4 visa will be able to work 10 or 20 hours per week during term time and unlimited hours during official vacation periods. Your visa should state how many hours you are allowed to work, but if this is not clear, please contact the International Student Support Service for further advice. Your School will be able to tell you the official vacation dates for your course. You must never work more hours than you are permitted.

'Week' has been defined as "a period of 7 days beginning with a Monday". For example, if your visa allows you to work 20 hours per week during term time, you must ensure that you do not work for more than 20 hours between Monday and Sunday of each week.

Employers have a legal obligation to check that you are allowed to work in the UK. You must be able to evidence this by showing them your current passport and/or your current biometric residence permit. You will also be asked to provide your employer with information about the term and vacation dates for your course so that it is clear to your employer and to UKVI when you are allowed to work more than 10 or 20 hours a week. Your school office will be able to provide you with a letter confirming the term and vacation dates for your course.

More information

You will find further information about working in the UK during your studies on the UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs) website:

www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Can-you-work

Work placements

As a Tier 4 student, you can do a work placement only if it is an integral and assessed part of your course (such as a sandwich course). If studying at undergraduate degree level or above, the work placement must not exceed more than 50 percent of the total length of your course.

Work placements can be paid or unpaid and can be full time, even in term time. The work endorsement on your visa will not state this, but the [Home Office guidance for employers](#) explains it.

If you have permission to work in the UK, you can do a part-time job in addition to your full-time work placements.

If you have already started a course and would like to change it to one that includes a work placement and, as a result, need to spend longer in the UK, you will have to make another Tier 4 visa application before your current visa expires. You can make this application in the UK or overseas.

Volunteering and voluntary work

It is important to note the distinction between volunteering and voluntary work. You can do voluntary work only if you are permitted to work in the UK.

Students on **short-term student visas** can volunteer but cannot do voluntary work. Students on **Tier 4 visas** can volunteer or do voluntary work however, if doing voluntary work, this must not exceed the number of hours you are permitted to work during term time.

Factors to consider when determining the difference between volunteering and voluntary work include:

Volunteering:

- there is no contract of employment
- the role does not take the place of an employee
- you must not receive payment in kind however, reimbursement for reasonable travel and expenses is allowed
- this would usually be to help a voluntary or public sector organisation or a charity

Voluntary work:

- there is often a contract with the employer (this means the employer must provide the work and the voluntary worker must attend at particular times and carry out specific tasks)
- voluntary workers usually receive payment in kind

National Insurance

International students working in the UK are liable to pay National Insurance contributions in the same way as UK citizens. You do not start paying National Insurance contributions until you earn above a certain amount (£240 per week for the 2019/20). You do not require a National Insurance number before you start working in the UK. In fact, you will only be able to apply for one once you have found a job or can provide evidence that you are looking for a job.

To apply for a National Insurance number, you will need to contact Jobcentre Plus by telephone: 0800 141 2075 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm). You will be asked to give some personal details such as your name, address, nationality, date of birth, visa information and date you came to the UK. You will then need to attend an appointment at the local Jobcentre Plus and take the following documents with you:

- NTU ID card
- Proof of employment (e.g. a payslip, your contract or a letter from your employer) or proof that you are seeking employment (e.g. copies of application forms, letter confirming you are registered with an agency, etc.).
- Passport and proof of your immigration status (visa/Biometric Residence Permit)
- Police registration certificate (if applicable)
- Proof of your address in Nottingham

Please note, appointments are in high demand, so you may not get one immediately. There will then be a delay between your appointment and you receiving your NI number. In the meantime, you can start work but you will pay tax and national insurance contributions on an emergency tax code. You will need to seek a refund for any overpayments once you have received your NI number (see below).

Income Tax

International students are subject to UK tax laws. The personal tax allowance for the 2019-20 tax year for a single person is £12,500. You will have to pay income tax on any amount you earn above this figure. The tax year starts on 6 April and finishes on 5 April the following year.

If you only work for a short period in a tax year, or are leaving the UK part-way through a tax year, you may be entitled to a refund for overpaid income tax. Please check the link below for more details about how to claim back overpaid tax:

www.litrq.org.uk/tax-guides/migrants-and-tax/other-migrant-issues/how-do-i-claim-tax-back

Your employer or HM Revenue and Customs (tax office) should be able to answer any further questions you have about tax. There is information at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals or telephone 0300 200 3300.

Working after your studies

If your immigration permission extends beyond your course end date, you can work full time once you have completed your studies, but only up to a maximum of 4 months after the end date of your course. If you wish to stay for longer in order to work, you will need to apply for a suitable visa. You should be aware that opportunities are very limited. An up-to-date summary of different schemes is available from: www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies

The International Student Support Service can only provide advice on Tier 4 applications. The University's Employability team has some information on their website (www.ntu.ac.uk/yf-international, NTU login required) about tier 2, tier 1 and tier 5 visas. The International Student Support Service can provide you with details of local immigration specialists who may be able to give you more detailed advice. You will need to make your own enquiries about the services they provide and the costs involved.

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