

Employability & Careers Centre

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International Students: Getting a Job

You are welcome to use the Employability & Careers Centre at any time while you are here or after your studies are finished. We can help you with any careers-related issues, whatever subject you are studying. This includes thinking about your career choices, finding out about work or even changing your course. This leaflet explains what you, as an international student, have to do to make sure you are working in a legal way.

Please note: the rules and regulations around working in the UK are complex and change frequently. Before taking any action or making any decisions based on the information in this leaflet, we recommend that you check the details are still accurate. Good ways to do this are to look on the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration or speak to the University's International Student Support (ISS) www.surrey.ac.uk/currentstudents/visa/about/.

Working during your studies

Part-time, temporary and vacation work

If you are from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and are studying on a full-time degree programme in the UK on a valid student visa, you can carry out casual and temporary work whilst studying for up to 20 hours per week in term time and any number of hours during vacation periods, provided the stamp in your passport does not prohibit you from working. Time spent writing up a dissertation or thesis **does not** count as a vacation so you are still limited to up to 20 hours per week during this period. **Remember that your course work can take up a lot of time during semesters so you should consider working less than 20 hours per week.**

You must not fill a permanent full time vacancy, engage in business, self-employment or be a professional sports person or entertainer.

It can also be useful to undertake relevant vacation work in your home country if you can. Use any contacts/networks you have. The Employability & Careers Centre website has useful information on this at: www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/work/abroad.

For more information on all aspects of working during your studies, please visit:

- UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration
- UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Can-you-work

- Getting Work Experience as an International Student targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/international-students/417078-getting-work-experience-as-an-international-student
- University's International Student Support (ISS) www.surrey.ac.uk/currentstudents/visa/about/.

Professional Training Year

If you are an undergraduate, you can undertake work placement which is part of a so-called "sandwich course". It should not be shorter than 30 working weeks and completed within your current period of permission to be in the UK as a student. For more information about Professional Training Year please visit www.surrey.ac.uk/professionaltraining/.

Getting a National Insurance (NI) Number

When you start work in the UK your employer will ask for your National Insurance (NI) number. This is used to record your NI contributions, which international students working in the UK must pay to the government in the same way as UK citizens. You apply to the government to get this number. You should not apply until you have found a job but you can start work before the process of issuing the number is complete, which takes about five weeks. Phone 0345 6000643 once you have found a job. This call centre will arrange a local interview to process your application and will tell you what documents to take. The University Student Services Centre produces a useful leaflet on getting an NI number – it is available from Student Services Centre.

Do I have to pay Income Tax?

Generally you will have to pay income tax on your earnings. The UK has an efficient tax collection system run by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). For more information please visit www.hmrc.gov.uk. Your employer deducts the tax you owe the government before you receive your pay.

Note: in job adverts the salary is shown before tax is deducted.

The HMRC have a tax checker to help you calculate if you have to pay tax, see the link to their webpage above. If you work only in the holidays and your total income from all sources (apart from student loans, scholarships and educational grants) is not more than £11,500 between 6 April 2017 and 5 April 2018, you might be able to receive your wages without tax being deducted. You and your employer have to complete form P50 which is available to order or download from the HMRC website. If your total income is not more than £11,500 in the tax year ending 5 April 2018, and you have paid income tax, you might be able to claim back your tax payments from the HMRC. For information about how to claim your tax back and about using form P50, check the HMRC website. Our student money team are also able to give advice. Contact moneysupport@surrey.ac.uk or 01483 686868.

Once you have completed your course

If you currently have permission to work as a student, you can work full-time when you have completed your course, subject to visa requirements. The date on which you finish your studies is the end of the spring semester (undergraduate study) or the date you hand in your

dissertation/thesis (postgraduate study). You should not work full-time before then and you must still comply with the student restrictions. This means that you must not be self-employed or work as a professional sportsperson or entertainer nor must you take a permanent full-time job.

If your employer requires confirmation that you can work full-time when you have completed your studies or if you would like to check this yourself, please have a look at An employer's guide to right to work checks (Students - p. 18) available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide.

Am I allowed to get a permanent job in the UK after graduation?

The legislation for the terms under which international students can remain in the UK is complex and the regulations change frequently. If you are coming to the end of your studies in the UK, you might be considering the possibility of staying on in the UK to work. If you are thinking about this, make an appointment with an International Student Adviser at the University's International Student Support www.surrey.ac.uk/currentstudents/visa/about/. They offer advice on visa issues.

Help is also available from:

- UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) www.ukcisa.org.uk
- UKCISA, Working in the UK after your studies have ended www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies
- TARGETjobs:
 - International Students targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/international-students
 - Visas and permits for international students who wish to work in the UK targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/international-students/417088-visas-and-permits-for-international-students-who-wish-to-work-in-the-uk
- GOV.UK:
 - Work visas www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/work-visas
 - List of organisations licensed to sponsor workers under Tiers 2 and 5 www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers
 - Shortage occupation lists www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-advisory-committee-recommended-shortage-lists
 - Sponsorship www.gov.uk/government/collections/sponsorship-information-for-employers-and-educators
 - An employer's guide to right to work checks (Students - p. 25) www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checks-employers-guide
- The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants www.icwi.org.uk
- Access Tier 5 accesstier5.com/
- Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur www.gov.uk/tier-1-graduate-entrepreneur-visa
- Doctorate Extension Scheme www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Working/Working-after-studies#layer-3780. This scheme is designed to give students who have almost finished their UK PhD or other doctorate qualification an additional 12 months of Tier 4 (General) immigration permission in which to look for and start work in the UK.

Remember

- For some of the schemes, you might have to return to your home country to apply from there. This is because most of the schemes have strict rules about who is allowed to

'switch' from another immigration category (for example, 'student'), into the scheme whilst still in the UK

- For many of the schemes, you must have successfully completed your course before you can apply to 'switch' into the scheme
- If you want to stay in the UK under one of these schemes, you must make your application before your current student visa expires.
- If you have been sponsored by a government or international scholarship agency for your studies, most of the schemes require that you obtain their written permission.
- A leaflet with useful information for employers published by agcas called Recruiting International Graduates is available from the Employability & Careers Centre.

Job Hunting

If you are ready to seek employment in the UK, then you should follow the same process as all other job seekers. Identify possible employers and make direct or speculative applications using a CV or application form as they require. The Employability & Careers Centre has leaflets to help you. It is worth bearing in mind that employers, particularly smaller ones, may not know all the relevant rules and regulations on employing international students or graduates. You can increase your chances of success by educating yourself about the different rules that apply to your own situation, and be prepared to answer any questions an employer may have. It may help to take along documentation with you to interview that shows any entitlement you may have to work in the UK. Another area to consider is how your qualifications from your home country relate to UK qualifications. Some larger employers will be familiar with the comparability of overseas qualifications, but others - again often smaller employers - won't be. In this case it may be useful to provide them with this information on your CV or Application Form. Information on the comparability of UK and overseas qualifications is available from UK NARIC: www.naric.org.uk.

Employment in other countries

The majority of international students return to their home country to start their career, even if they plan to work internationally, as this is often the easiest way of getting started. International opportunities, which will draw on your experience of studying and living in the UK, may be found in many different types of organisation in your home country e.g. multi-national corporations, finance institutions, government departments, import/export or travel businesses. If you return home at vacations, try and explore local opportunities, recruitment timetables, contacts and procedures for local graduate recruitment. Local professional associations may also give you information on vacancies. Try to obtain website or e-mail addresses to keep in touch back in the UK. Useful information is available at: www.prospects.ac.uk/links/countries .

If you want to work in a country other than your home country, you will need to check and follow the immigration procedures carefully (approval usually takes 3 - 6 months). Check any offers of employment carefully as, for example, fixed term contracts may include a 'bond', requiring you to repay part of your earnings/hiring costs if you break the contract. Every country operates differently with regard to its recruitment timetable and main methods of graduate recruitment and you will need to check these for each country. Vacancy bulletins and employer directories, available from the Employability & Careers Centre, occasionally carry job advertisements from companies overseas - sometimes professional journals do too. Some recruitment agencies specialise in overseas opportunities. **However, you should not pay money to an agency in the UK for help in finding work.** The

Employability & Careers Centre can inform you of any forthcoming Careers Fairs specialising in employment in specific countries or regions. Networking whilst visiting the target country or making contact with alumni associations in the country of interest can also be a good way to find out about jobs. At every stage in your job search you can discuss strategies or issues with Employability & Careers Centre staff.

The Employability & Careers Centre subscribe to **GoinGlobal** which is packed with country-specific career information. Each guide has been developed by a local career specialist, updated annually, and features recommended websites and detailed resource descriptions for vital employment topics including:

- Job search resources: general and specialized job sites, job fairs, newspapers that publish job ads, government employment offices, executive search firms, and temporary staffing agencies
- Country employment outlook and key industry trends
- Top company listings: corporate profiles of the largest employers including NAICS descriptions, revenue and full contact information
- Industry-specific trade and professional organization information: issues of special concern for foreign professionals, education requirements, trade associations and industry web sites
- Business resources: trade councils, chambers of commerce, and other professional and social networking groups
- Work permit and visa regulations
- Finance and compensation information: taxes, housing, transportation, cost of living, medical insurance, vacation/leave, pensions, social security, and more
- Resume/CV writing guidelines and examples
- Interview advice
- Cultural advice.

More information and the details of how to access **GoinGlobal** are available at www.surrey.ac.uk/careers/current/work/abroad/.

Timing your job hunting

In the UK, the graduate recruitment cycle begins at the start of the academic year, just under a year before actual employment starts. Employers expect you to seek out their vacancies and make direct contact with them. Many large, multinational companies set deadlines in December or January (or even earlier) to receive applications from new graduates and postgraduates. As there are different recruitment timetables in different countries you will need to plan early. You will need to research immigration requirements as well as employment opportunities. Applying for employment as a graduate in your home country, before you leave the UK, also requires planning and organisation.

How the Employability & Careers Centre can help you

The Employability & Careers Centre is in the Philip Marchant Building which we share with the Accommodation Service. Please see www.surrey.ac.uk/careers for more information. We are open throughout the year and offer a range of advice and information services to all students to help you job hunt efficiently. These include:

- One-to-one confidential appointments with a Careers Adviser to discuss any careers related issue. Book this in advance – in person or by calling 01483 689001
- Departmental talks delivered by Careers Advisers
- Website with online Careers information resources with information on vacancies, country profiles, postgraduate study as well as on graduate level occupations at www.surrey.ac.uk/careers. If you are unsure how to use the information sources – just ask!
- Workshops and employer presentations, in the autumn and spring semesters. For details, please visit the Careers website and see the [What's On](#) section
- Feedback on your CV, covering letter or application forms
- One-to-one practice interviews to enable you to prepare for job interviews

And finally,

The Employability & Careers Centre would be pleased to find out what sources of information you have found particularly helpful. We can learn from your experiences and aim to continually improve the service we offer.