International Office Guide
Working during your studies

www.nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/workingintheuk
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The information provided in this guide is correct at the time of publication (April 2015) however it is subject to change without notice. For the most up-to-date information, please check the online version of this guide at [www.nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/guides](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/guides)

Your permission to work in the UK is determined by the type of visa that you have. Most international students hold Tier 4 (General) student visas which allow a student to work albeit with some restrictions and rules attached about the number of hours per week. Students who hold student visitor visas are not allowed to work in the UK at all.

**Permission to work**

Students studying a course at degree level or above are usually permitted to work up to 20 hours per week in term-time and full-time in vacation periods if they hold a Tier 4 student visa.

Students studying a course below degree level are usually permitted to work up to 10 hours per week in term-time and full-time in vacation periods if they hold a Tier 4 student visa.

Student visa holders cannot:
- engage in business or self-employment,
- work as a professional entertainer or sports person, or
- pursue a career through a permanent full-time vacancy.

If a student, having completed their course, makes an application for leave under the Points-Based System before their existing leave expires, they are permitted to work full-time, within the limits described above, until their application is decided. It is very important that you abide by the conditions of your visa. For example, you must not work more than the permitted hours per week during term-time - this is a serious offence and may jeopardise your stay in the UK.

If you have either of the following two forms of wording in your visa you are not allowed to work at all in the UK.
- No work or recourse to public funds
- Leave to enter/remain in the United Kingdom on condition that the holder maintains and accommodates himself and any dependants without recourse to public funds, does not enter employment paid or unpaid and does not engage in any business or profession, is hereby given for/until (date).

**Requirement for your visa to be in the current passport, or on a BRP**

According to the Code of Practice on Preventing Illegal Working (May 2014), employers must ask for evidence of your right to work (visa) which should be contained either within a current passport or on a Biometric Residence Card (BRP). If you have renewed your passport therefore and have kept a valid visa in your old passport, you will need to transfer your visa to your new passport if you are taking a job with a new employer. See here for further information on this process: [www.gov.uk/transfer-visa](http://www.gov.uk/transfer-visa)
Income

Many international students in the UK do find part-time or vacation work. It is a good way of meeting new people, practising English and gaining useful transferable skills. However, you must not rely on finding a job to form a substantial part of your income. According to the Immigration Rules, you should have access to sufficient funds to accommodate and maintain yourself in the UK without needing to work. It can be quite difficult to find suitable part-time employment to fit in with your university timetable. Most students can earn on average about £200 per month through part-time work. A job may make a significant contribution to your expenses, but it must not be your only source of income.

Working during vacation periods

Guidance on the Immigration Rules indicate that vacation time is specific to the course you are on. Undergraduate students can consider that their vacation period falls in line with the university vacation periods. For more information, visit www.nottingham.ac.uk/about/keydates

Unlike the undergraduate course structure, the study period for postgraduate students does not follow the term-time/vacation pattern and postgraduate students are required to maintain a study commitment throughout the year.

Students following a masters course should note that the summer months between June and September are not considered as vacation time. Please see further details under ‘Graduation’ for information on working once your course is complete at the end of September.

Students following a PhD programme wishing to work part-time up to 20 hours per week should be aware of University regulations which stipulate that full-time research students can only take paid employment with the permission of the Head of School, in consultation with their supervisor and in accordance with any scholarship requirements and immigration rules. PhD students wishing to work full-time would need to take note of the above and, in addition, would need to agree holiday time with their supervisor.

PhD students should also be aware that while awaiting their viva voce or doing corrections after the viva voce they are still considered to be studying and should abide by all of the normal regulations before seeking work.

Proving you are allowed to work

Employers will usually ask to see your passport and current visa to check that they can legally employ you. They should also ask for a university letter confirming university holidays / term time which you can request via the Online Store at store.nottingham.ac.uk (Product Catalogue > Student Documents and Letters > Letters)

Postgraduate research (PhD, DM, MPhil) students who are seeking to work more than 20 hours per week will also need to obtain a further letter of permission from their supervisor relating to the agreed holiday before starting work.

If an employer asks for more evidence than that shown by your visa, you can refer them to the following information:

- The UK Council for International Student Affairs website at www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/working_during.php
- UK Visa and Immigration information / helpline for employers: www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work

Working while you are waiting for a decision on your visa application

If you have submitted a visa application for an extension in the UK you are allowed to continue to work under the conditions of your previous leave. If however, you receive a visa refusal, you should stop working immediately even if you plan to make a fresh visa application shortly. You should not resume working until you have successfully received immigration permission to remain in the UK and as long as your new visa allows work.

If after completing your course you make an application for leave under the Points-Based System before your Tier 4 student visa expires, you will be permitted to work full-time, within the limits described previously, until your application is decided.
Internships, work placements and industrial experience

An internship is a short period of paid work that an employer may offer a potential employee. Within the standard student visa restriction on working, you are permitted to undertake an internship. An undergraduate student could do this during the summer months or, like masters students, they can undertake an internship after graduation in the four month period remaining on the visa.

Students in the UK on Tier 4 visas are able to undertake work placements if the placement is an assessed part of the course, the student remains registered with the University during the placement and the placement is no more than 50% of the course in the UK. If the student is on a foundation course and would like to take a work placement, they should contact the International Office for further advice. The School will have a responsibility to monitor the attendance of students on work placement.

Under the Immigration Rules, it is not possible for students wishing to take a year out to work to suspend their studies in order to do so. For international students on Tier 4 student visas any change in your study pattern, such as a suspension, needs to be reported to UK Visas and Immigration. The student's visa would then be cancelled and they would be required to leave the UK.

Graduation

During the period spent waiting for graduation, providing this is not more than four months, it is possible to work full-time as your registered studies have come to an end.

For an undergraduate student this might be the period in between June and October or for a masters student this is usually the period between September and January. PhD students can work full-time for four months or until the end of their visa, whichever comes first, after submitting their hard-bound thesis.

If you have a different length of time on your visa, please seek advice from the International Office about your working restrictions.

Dependants

If the student's visa is granted for less than 12 months any family members on dependant visas will not be allowed to work while in the UK.

Also, if the student’s grant of leave is for a course of study below degree level the family member will most likely not be allowed to work while in the UK.

In all other cases, dependants on Tier 4 dependant visas should be able to work full-time without restriction while accompanying the student in the UK.

Finding a job

The Careers and Employability Service at the University can help you to explore graduate careers, develop your employability skills, search for job vacancies and work experience placements, improve your job application and meet future employers. The service is free and is located in the Portland Building on D Floor and more information is available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers

UniTemps is the University’s recruitment agency for part-time and temporary work. They can help you to find part-time or temporary work on campus and in the local area and are located in the Portland Building on B Floor. For more information, please visit www.unitemps.co.uk

You can also look for jobs online at www.gov.uk/jobsearch, in local newspapers such as The Nottingham Evening Post on a Wednesday, and through employment agencies.

National Insurance numbers

Everyone who works in the UK must pay National Insurance contributions to the government. This payment funds social services such as healthcare, state pensions and social security.

You must apply for a National Insurance (NI) number if you have started or are about to start work. To apply you should telephone Jobcentre Plus on 0345 600 0643 between 8.00am and 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. Jobcentre Plus will check to make sure that you need a NI number and you don’t already have a NI number.
You will then be asked to attend an interview at a local Jobcentre Plus. Take your passport, police registration certificate (if applicable), student ID card, proof of your UK address such as a tenancy agreement or bank statement and a payslip or letter from your employer confirming your job details to your interview. You will receive your National Insurance number by letter. You are allowed to work during this waiting period and the number that you receive will be transferable from job to job.

For more information on National Insurance contributions, please see [www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number](http://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number)

**Income tax**

International students are subject to the same tax regulations as UK citizens. When you start work you must complete a P46 form which is available through your employer. This enables the Inland Revenue who are responsible for income tax to give you a tax code number so that you will not pay an emergency tax rate until you receive your National Insurance number.

**Basic earning limit for income tax and National Insurance**

The basic earning limit for income tax contributions is £10,600 per year for tax year April 2015 to April 2016. If you earn less than this, you do not have to pay income tax. For more information, visit: [www.gov.uk/income-tax](http://www.gov.uk/income-tax)

If you earn less than £155 per week for tax year April 2015 to April 2016 then you are exempt from paying National Insurance contributions but you will still need an National Insurance number.

**Croatian students**

If you are a national of Croatia and you want to work during your studies, it is likely you will have to register for permission to work by applying for a yellow registration certificate before you can start work.

Any employment is limited to 20 hours a week in term-time, but you can work full-time in your holidays and on approved work placements. The application costs £55.

Once you have graduated with a UK degree, you can apply for a blue registration certificate which proves your right to work on a full time basis, without restriction. For more information please see: [www.gov.uk/croatian-national](http://www.gov.uk/croatian-national)
For your notes
We’re here to help, get in touch:

We offer a professional and confidential advisory service to all international and EU students both before they join the University and once they have arrived.

You can contact us by email, telephone or in person. We run a regular service where you can meet an International Student Advisor, Monday to Friday throughout the academic year. To find out more about our service times and locations, please visit: www.nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/advisors

The International Office is located at:
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We are always looking for ways to develop and improve our support service and welcome feedback from staff and students.

The information in this leaflet is given in good faith and correct at the time of writing. It has been carefully checked in line with UKCISA and Home Office guidance, but The University of Nottingham accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information.

If you would like any further information or assistance, please contact us. The advisors, Rosemary Gibson, Melanie Bentham-Hill, Ruth Hudson, Amy Newham, Hong Sun and Deborah Webb are authorised to provide immigration advice and services by an order made under Section 84 (4) (d) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

If at any time you are not happy with the advice you have been given by the International Office, in the first instance you should raise this with the Head of International Support and Engagement or the Director of the International Office. If the matter is not resolved or you are still unhappy, you can make a complaint to the OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) via their website www.oisc.gov.uk

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