

Euraxess **UK**

The guide for international
researchers moving to the UK





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You can also keep up to date and in touch with Euraxess through twitter, **www.twitter.com/euraxessuk** and via our website, **www.euraxess.org.uk**

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Euraxess UK is part of the European Commission's Euraxess initiative, a service network involving 40 countries across Europe. Euraxess aims to remove the barriers to free movement of knowledge within Europe, to strengthen cross-border mobility of researchers, students, scientists and academic staff, and to provide researchers with better career structures. Find out more at: **www.ec.europa.eu/euraxess**

Foreword

The pursuit of knowledge in the 21st century is a global venture and researchers need to interact and collaborate with people from all over the world. It is considered normal, and even desirable, for researchers to spend part of their career in a foreign country and this can be an exciting and rewarding experience, expanding both professional and personal horizons. Indeed, studies suggest that researchers who do spend a period of time abroad before returning to their own country can be more productive than those who stay at home. However, it is not always easy to uproot oneself from familiar surroundings and sometimes the move to another country can seem daunting. Simple things, like how to open a bank account or find out about childcare, become more difficult in a foreign country. It is also sometimes hard to find funding to support international mobility, whether for a short visit or a longer-term fellowship. With this guide, and the associated website www.euraxess.org.uk, we hope to make your move to the UK easier, so that instead of worrying about practicalities you can relax and enjoy the experience.

Welcome to the UK!

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Entry formalities

Visas

UK points-based system

European Economic Area (EAE) and Swiss nationals

Visas

Preparing to come to the UK can be an exciting prospect, but getting to grips with immigration regulations can be a challenge. The information below should help you understand what is required. Please note: immigration and entry into the UK is managed by the UK Border Agency (UKBA). The information in this guide is correct as of 31 December 2013, but immigration regulations are subject to change. It is important to check the UKBA website for the most up-to-date information: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

Business Visitor (including Academic Visitor)

If you wish to come to the UK to lecture, attend meetings or conferences, or do academic work without taking up employment, you may be able to apply for a Business Visitor visa (for up to six months) or an Academic Visitor visa (up to 12 months). See the following website for more information: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/part2/



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UK points-based system

The points-based system consists of five tiers. Points are awarded for different attributes (for example, your qualifications, age, previous earnings, English language skills, and your available funds) and you need a certain number of points for each tier. You can see how many points you might be awarded with the online self-assessment.

If you are a world leader or potential world-leading talent in science you may qualify for a Tier 1 visa to enter the UK and seek work without needing a UK sponsor. For all other tiers you will need a UK sponsor; either an employer (Tier 2), an educational institution (Tier 4 and Tier 5) or another research institution (Tier 5). For more information, see the UK Border Agency website.

Applying for a visa can take time, so it's important to apply well in advance of when you intend to travel. You can find out about visa processing times in your country here: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/general-info/processing-times/

If you are a student, your right to work will depend on your immigration status. The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website provides advice on when students can and cannot work legally in the UK: www.ukcisa.org.uk

European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss nationals

All EEA and Swiss nationals can **enter** and **live in** the UK without needing to apply for permission. You may also apply for a registration certificate which confirms your right of residence in the UK. If you are a national of Croatia, you will normally need to apply for permission before you start **work**.

For more information about living and working in the UK as an EEA or Swiss national, go to the European Nationals section of the UK Border Agency website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens

Sponsored researchers

If you wish to come to the UK on a research fellowship for up to two years and are not taking up a job offer, you may apply to enter the UK as a sponsored researcher under the

Tier 5 Temporary Worker (government-authorised exchange) category. Your sponsor will be either a UK higher education institution or another research institution. For more details see: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/tier5/government-authorised-exchange/

A higher education institution can become a Tier 5 sponsor without requiring an overarching body if they are already licensed as a Tier 4 sponsor.

If you wish to enquire about setting up a government-authorised exchange scheme, please contact: Tier5GAEnquiries@ukba.gsi.gov.uk.

European Economic Area (EEA) countries

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Irish Republic, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are not members of the European Union (EU) but citizens of these countries have the same rights to enter, live in and work in the United Kingdom as EU citizens.

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

Residence permits for foreign nationals

The UK has introduced a Biometric Residence Permit which contains biographic and biometric information and information about immigration status. If you are a foreign national already in the UK and wish to extend your temporary permission to stay for a total of six months or more, or wish to settle in the UK, you must apply for a Biometric Residence Permit. This only applies to people from outside the European Economic Area.

For more information, visit the UK Border Agency website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/while-in-uk/do-i-need-brp/







Getting started

Accommodation

Banking

Health

Disability

Accommodation

It is important for you to have suitable, safe accommodation while you are based in the UK. Start making arrangements as soon as possible. This is especially important if you are planning to bring your family with you. Make sure that you arrange some form of accommodation before you arrive in the UK, even if it is only temporary, as having a UK address will help you to set up a bank account more quickly. If you can't manage this though, don't worry – there is plenty of choice when it comes to private rental accommodation and finding a house or flat to rent is usually not a problem. You could also think about buying a house if you plan to stay for a longer period.

University accommodation

Many universities offer accommodation to international students (including PhD students) at a reasonable rate. Some may also be able to arrange accommodation for international researchers.

Private renting

There are plenty of online search engines for finding private rental accommodation in the UK. You could try the National Association of Estate Agents www.naea.co.uk, which allows you to search for property type and price within a particular area. A similar service is provided by RightMove www.rightmove.co.uk. If you do not

want to rent through an agency, you could search the local papers for housing advertisements and rent directly from the owner. There are also free papers, such as Loot www.loot.com, where rental accommodation is advertised. Property websites like Gumtree www.gumtree.com or Property News www.propertynews.com are also often useful for finding local accommodation.

Accommodation falls into several categories, although there is often some blurring of the boundaries, particularly when referring to a bedsit or studio apartment. In general, the following terms are used (starting with the cheapest options):

- **Flat or house share.** You have your own bedroom but other facilities (living room, kitchen, bathroom) are shared with other people.
- **Bedsit.** You have your bedroom and living room combined. These are normally smaller than studio flats and often you have cooking facilities either within the room, or as a separate shared facility. You usually have to share a bathroom.
- **Studio flat.** Your bedroom and living room are combined. Often there is a separate kitchen. These should be self-contained (i.e. not sharing facilities with anyone).

- **Flat/apartment.** This is self-contained accommodation, with a separate living room and at least one bedroom; often on only one level and part of a larger building.
- **Maisonette.** Apartment/flat on two levels with internal stairs.
- **Bungalow.** House with only one level.
- **Terraced house.** House attached to two other houses, often in a row of similar houses.
- **Semi-detached house.** House sharing one wall with another house.
- **Detached house.** House standing alone.

The website: www.gov.uk has useful information (in the housing and local services section) for people who want to rent accommodation, including information on the different types of landlord and tenancy agreements, and advice on what to do if you have a problem with your landlord. Landlords are generally responsible for the maintenance and safety of the property, and if you would like to know what this includes, visit: www.gov.uk/renting-out-a-property (England and Wales) or www.gov.uk/renting-out-your-property-scotland (Scotland).

Useful websites

National Association of Estate Agents
www.naea.co.uk

UK Student Life
www.ukstudentlife.com

Gov.uk
www.gov.uk

Accommodation costs

Accommodation and related costs vary greatly throughout the UK and often depend on the type of accommodation. Below is a list of the sort of expenses you may incur. For further information visit the Euraxess-UK website.

- Deposit
- Rent/mortgage repayments
- Furniture
- Council tax
- Building and contents insurance
- Utility bills (gas/electricity/water)
- Telephone
- Internet
- Television licence.

Buying

If you stay for a substantial period of time in the UK it may make sense for you to buy a house. However, you should probably wait until you have settled in before you take this step, and get to know the area in which you would like to buy. Some of the things you should bear in mind are:

- **Arranging a mortgage.** This may be more difficult if you have a short-term grant or stipend instead of a regular salary.
- **Saving up for a deposit.** The deposit is normally around 25 percent of the purchase price.
- **Solicitor's/conveyancer's fees.** These can vary according to the area and property.

The website www.gov.uk has useful information about buying a house and choosing mortgage lenders in the Owning and renting a property section of the website.



Banking

There is a lot of variation in bank accounts in the UK and it's important to look around at different banks and building societies to find out which suits you best. You can find out more about different types of bank accounts at the Money Advice Service www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/categories/managing-your-money, the information service from the Financial Services Authority. The two main types of account are the basic bank account and the current account. Most bank accounts are free but many banks offer additional services such as insurance packages, for which you will have to pay a monthly fee. Think carefully about whether these are useful for you, and good value for money, before you commit to a monthly charge for your bank account.

For example, there are special bank accounts for foreigners coming to the UK, which can be opened either before you arrive in the UK, or a few months after you arrive. You will probably have to pay a subscription charge to open these accounts, but they often include additional services such as discount offers and are sometimes easier to open than regular accounts if you do not have official proof of a UK address.

When choosing a bank account you should think about whether you will use your bank card abroad or make many transactions in other currencies; some banks charge for this but others do not.

There is also a variation in the amount that banks charge for international money transfers. If you plan to send money abroad regularly you may be better off using a reputable foreign-exchange broker rather than sending it through your bank.

If you have already opened a bank account in your home country and are planning to use it in the UK, please ensure that you inform your bank in your home country that you are moving. You should do this before you move.

We suggest that you open a current account, which would provide you with the following services:

- a credit/debit card that you can use at cash machines across the UK to withdraw cash or to purchase anything online
- setting up direct debits or standing orders
- paying by cheque
- the possibility of an overdraft facility.

Bank versus building society

Banks and building societies both offer current accounts, savings accounts and investments. The main difference between them is that banks operate for their shareholders, while building societies are mutual institutions; this means that people with a building society account are effectively members and have a right to vote on issues affecting the society.

Opening a bank account

In the past few years it has become more complicated to open a bank account in the UK, owing to the tight laws designed to prevent money laundering or terrorist activity. You will only be able to open a bank account close to where you live or work, not in a third region. Most banks require proof of identity and proof of your UK address (bank statement, EU/EAA identity card, tenancy agreement, utility bill, council tax bill, official letter from employer), and for certain accounts you may also need proof of income. If you cannot obtain proof of income, you should still be able to open a basic bank account, but may not be entitled to credit facilities, such as an overdraft or credit/debit cards. Remember that banks and building societies have different policies on opening bank accounts and therefore if one bank will not let you open an account this does not mean that you cannot get one: you just may have to look around a bit more. Try asking other international researchers what they did, or talk to your personnel department, as sometimes banks on university campuses have special arrangements regarding bank accounts for foreigners. The British Bankers' Association produces a leaflet 'Opening a bank account if you are new or returning to the UK' that you can access online: www.bba.org.uk

Bank opening hours

Opening hours are decided by individual banks and may differ considerably from branch to branch; they are usually open between 09.00 and 17.00 weekdays but check your branch for specific opening hours.

Some banks in Scotland close for an hour at lunchtime.

Some banks are open all day on Saturday and a few are now open on Sunday for limited hours. Cash may be drawn from cash machines (ATMs). Many branches also have 24-hour banking lobbies where a range of services can be obtained through machines. It is advisable to check each individual bank.

Irish and Scottish bank notes

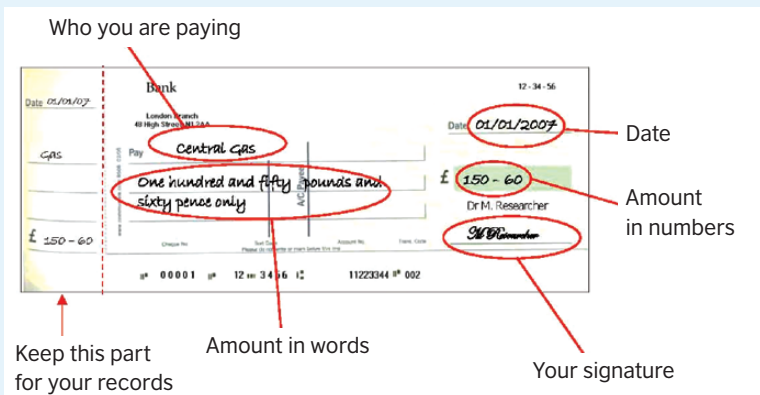
Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own bank notes. These can be used elsewhere in the UK, but shops are sometimes reluctant to accept them. If you have any trouble getting them accepted ask a bank to swap them for Bank of England notes. This can be done free of charge.

Using a cheque book

Cheques can be used as an alternative way of payment, and are useful for sending payment through the post. If you use a cheque in a shop you will probably be asked to show a cheque guarantee card, which should have been issued with your chequebook. Make sure that you have enough money in your account to cover any cheques that you write, otherwise you may have to pay a fine and will get a bad credit rating, which can make

things difficult for you in the future. However, cheques are being phased out by 2018 and all major UK supermarket chains have already chosen to stop accepting cheques so please check with the retailer before reaching the checkout.

Follow the guide below for filling in a cheque, and if you're paying a bill it is advisable to write your reference number or account number on the back of the cheque.



Standing orders and direct debits

A standing order is an instruction you give to your bank to pay a set amount, usually each month, to a particular person or supplier. The amount can only be changed by you.

A direct debit is an instruction to your bank to let a supplier have money from your bank account to settle your bills. Normally, the amount can be changed by the supplier, so long as they give you ten working days notice of the amount so that you can cancel the direct debit if you are not happy.

You can cancel direct debits and standing orders by writing to your bank, or by changing your bank account instructions online (see below). If there is not enough money in your account to pay a standing order or direct debit, the bank does not have to pay it, and you may be charged a fee.

Online banking

Most banks now offer an online banking service, which can be a convenient way of managing your finances. If you do open an online bank account make sure that you have the necessary security measures on your computer, and never disclose your user name or password by email.

Currency

The currency in the UK is pounds sterling (£) and pence (p).

For up-to-date exchange rates, visit: www.xe.com

Useful websites

For more information about insurance and banking: www.euraxess.org.uk

Managing Your Money from the Money Advice Service: www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/categories/managing-your-money

Useful contacts

Emergency number (ambulance, police, fire) – dial **999** or **112**

NHS Direct 111
(24-hour medical helpline)
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

NHS England
www.nhs.uk/nhsengland

NHS Wales
www.wales.nhs.uk

NHS Scotland
www.show.scot.nhs.uk

NHS Northern Ireland
www.n-i.nhs.uk

Department of Health
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

Government services and information
www.gov.uk

Health

The National Health Service

The National Health Service (NHS) was set up in 1948 and is designed to provide free or low-cost medical treatment to all legal residents of the UK. The type of care is classified as primary (the first point of contact for patients) or secondary (e.g. hospital treatment after being referred by a doctor).

Primary care providers

- **Pharmacists.** Pharmacists can advise on minor medical conditions (such as skin allergies), some can offer repeat prescriptions or prescribe medicine and some offer tests to monitor conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Advice from pharmacists is free but unless you are exempt you will have to pay a charge for prescriptions (except in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland where there are no prescription charges).
- **Doctors (General Practitioners).** General Practitioners (GPs) are local doctors who deal with the health of the local community. They normally work in 'Doctors' surgeries' (GP practices), with other doctors, nurses, health visitors and midwives, and visits to the surgery are free to all UK residents. The GP practice is often the first point of call for someone with health concerns, and

if a GP cannot deal with your problem he or she will refer you to a specialist or to hospital. You can find your nearest GP in the telephone directory or online, and you need to register in order to receive treatment. To register you will need a brief medical check-up and it may be helpful to have details of your medical history with you. You will be given an NHS number, which will then be used to keep track of your medical history and if you decide to change your GP you should give them details of your previous GP, along with your NHS number.

- **Opticians.** These carry out eye and sight examinations. Unless you are entitled to a free eye test (for example if you are under 18, have diabetes or glaucoma, or are claiming certain benefits), you will have to pay for these services.
- **Dentists.** Dentists offer routine and specialist care for teeth and gums. Most dental practices take a mixture of NHS and private patients. Even if you are registered as an NHS patient, you will still have to pay some charges for dental treatment unless you are exempt from charges (for example, if you are under 18, if you are pregnant or have had a baby in the past 12 months, or if you are claiming certain benefits).

- **NHS walk-in centres.** These give quick and easy access to care for minor injuries and complaints, and are often open outside normal surgery hours. You don't need to make an appointment or register to receive care at a walk-in centre, and treatment is free to all UK residents.
- **NHS Direct.** This is a telephone and online service giving advice on health issues. It can help you to decide if you need to see a doctor and give you advice about staying healthy. The website www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/ also has information on various health issues in several different languages. The telephone number for NHS Direct is **111**; some areas of the country are still covered by the **0845 4647** number; to find out if the area where you live is still using the 0845 number, visit: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/en/About/WhatIsNHSDirect/0845areas
- **Emergency and urgent care.** This includes out-of-hours services, ambulance services and accident and emergency services. In a medical emergency you should call either **999** or **112** (112 is also the emergency number in mainland Europe).

Secondary care providers

- **Ambulance trusts.** Ambulance services respond to emergencies and are responsible for providing first aid and transport to hospital.
- **NHS trusts.** Hospitals are managed by NHS trusts. Except in emergencies, hospital treatment is arranged through a GP, who will give you a referral for a particular condition. Appointments and treatment at NHS hospitals are free to UK residents.
- **Mental health trusts.** These provide specialist care for people with mental health problems, including psychological therapy and specialist medical services.
- **Care trusts.** These co-ordinate health care and social services care.

Medical reports

You should have a health check at least four weeks before you leave for the UK. Don't leave this to the last minute, as you won't have enough time to readjust to any medication before starting out on your journey and course of research.

Free medical treatment under the National Health Service.

If you (or your family) are visiting the UK for **less than six months** you are **not** entitled to free non-emergency treatment under the NHS. You will either need to have medical insurance or, if you are from the European Economic Area, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Even if you are a UK national, but have not lived in the UK for several years, if you are only visiting you will need some form of medical insurance.

If you live lawfully in the UK and you have chosen to live and settle in the UK for the time being (more than six months) you will normally be considered to be 'ordinarily resident' in the UK and have the same rights to free healthcare as a UK citizen. This includes free hospital treatment and treatment by a GP, but you will still have to pay other costs, such as prescription charges, unless you are exempt from these charges.

Visit: www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/healthcare_e/healthcare_help_with_health_costs_e/nhs_charges_for_people_from_abroad.htm to see if you are entitled to free NHS care.

Everyone, whether considered 'ordinarily resident' or not, is entitled to **free emergency treatment** given at a GP practice, an accident and emergency department or a similar centre. Subsequent treatment as an in-patient or outpatient is not free.

Treatment for some communicable diseases is also exempt from charges.

You can find out more about NHS charges and help with NHS costs on the website www.gov.uk and for more information for overseas visitors, go to: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

The European Health Insurance Card

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles you to reduced-cost, sometimes free, medical treatment that becomes necessary while you're in a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland. If you are ordinarily resident in the UK you can apply for a UK-issued EHIC card, but there are some restrictions to cover, depending on your nationality. For more information and to register online for an EHIC card, visit: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic.aspx

Private medical care

There are also private healthcare providers in the UK, and many NHS practitioners also perform services for private patients. These services are more expensive than treatment on the NHS and are often paid for through private medical insurance schemes. In some cases this allows patients to obtain treatment earlier than they would have been able to on the NHS.

Disability

If you are disabled, there may be additional forms of support you can access during your period of study or work at a higher education institution (HEI) in the UK. The definition of disability may be different to the one that operates in your home country, so it is worth understanding how UK law defines a disabled person. You are considered a disabled person under UK law if you have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. You may find it useful to refer to the ECU webpages, which provide further information on the legal definition of disability, see: www.ecu.ac.uk/law/disability-key-legislation

The term 'impairment' covers a range of conditions including, though not limited to, learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia), physical impairments, sensory impairments and facial disfigurement, speech impairment and mental illness. If you have an impairment (or a range of impairments) and they mean you have difficulties in your day-to-day life, it is likely that you are could be defined as a disabled person in UK law.

If you think that you will require support because of an impairment, it is a good idea to speak to (or email) the HEI you will be studying or working at before you leave your home country. Most institutions have a specialist disability service that may or may not be part of a broader welfare service. The disability



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service staff will speak to you about how your impairment affects you on a day-to-day basis and discuss how they may be able to best support you. If you are a student this will mean considering making adjustments to how you study or providing you with equipment to assist you in completing your course. If you are a member of staff this may include providing you with equipment to remove any barriers that may otherwise cause you difficulties at work or by arranging the hours you work to fit in with the way your impairment affects you.

Different HEIs take different approaches to providing this support, and although there is a legal requirement for HEIs to look to provide adjustments for international researchers, there may

be circumstances where an HEI will be unable to do so. Again, it is important to make contact with the institution to clarify what support they will be able to provide for you.

There are some additional resources that it may be useful to consult in making your decision to study in the UK:

www.internationalstaff.ac.uk/living-in-the-uk/disability/

www.miusa.org/





Working

Finding a job

Tax

Social security

Pensions

Qualification recognition

Finding a job

Research jobs

If you are looking for research employment there are several resources that might be useful to you. Most of these are available on the internet, and allow you to search for jobs, post your Curriculum vitae (CV) and access support and advice about work and careers. Below are a few examples, but a more complete list is available on the Euraxess UK website.

- **Euraxess – researchers in motion** has a searchable database of research jobs throughout Europe: www.ec.europa.eu/euraxess
- **Jobs.ac.uk** is a specialist website for careers in academic, research, science and related professions: www.jobs.ac.uk
- **New Scientist jobs.** The weekly *New Scientist* magazine advertises positions in the UK and worldwide. You can search the database online and access careers resources: www.newscientistjobs.com
- **sciencecareers.org.** A service from *Science* magazine offering careers advice and information about jobs, funding, meetings and events: www.sciencecareers.org

- **naturejobs.com.** The *Nature* jobs website has a searchable database of jobs, a careers magazine and a spotlights and regions section providing information about research around the world: www.naturejobs.com

Non-research jobs

If you decide to change career, or would like to find a job for your partner, see the many general resources available. One of the best websites is *Guardian jobs* www.jobs.guardian.co.uk, which advertises positions from all sectors and has advice about how to prepare for interviews and write CVs and covering letters. You could also visit your local Jobcentre to find local job vacancies and advice, or call Jobseeker Direct on 0845 6060 234. For more details visit the Jobcentre Plus website: www.jobseekers.direct.gov.uk

Tax

If you live and work in the UK you will normally have to pay tax. When you start work for the first time your employer will give you a form to complete called 'P46 Employee without a P45', which will ensure that you pay the correct amount of tax. If you are self-employed you will need to obtain a National Insurance Number from your local Jobcentre and then register as self-employed with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC – the UK body dealing with tax). You can register online at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/migrantworkers/self-employed.htm

If you have income from a foreign country that is taxed in that country, you may be entitled to an exemption from paying UK tax through a double taxation agreement. See: www.hmrc.gov.uk/international/dta-claim.htm

If you have left or are about to leave the UK you can use form P85 to claim a tax refund and to inform HMRC about any UK income that you continue to receive.

Types of tax

The most likely types of tax that you will have to pay are:

■ Income Tax

This is a tax on your income, including wages, interest from savings and investments, and rent

from property. You will also have to pay Income Tax on pensions and certain benefits. The amount of income tax you have to pay depends on how much you earn. PhD students do not normally have to pay tax on grants from outside the UK but if you are a postdoctoral researcher, you may have to pay tax on your grant or fellowship. Contact your tax office to find out, and see: www.hmrc.gov.uk/migrantworkers/uk-tax.htm

■ Capital Gains Tax

This is a tax on any profit from an asset that you have sold or given away, for example on the sale of a second home. You do not have to pay Capital Gains Tax when you sell your main home. For more information see: www.hmrc.gov.uk/cgt/intro/

■ Stamp Duty

If you buy or transfer property over a threshold value of £125,000, you have to pay Stamp Duty Land Tax. If you buy shares, you may also have to pay a type of Stamp Duty. For more information see: www.hmrc.gov.uk/sdlt/intro/basics.htm

There are also other types of taxes, such as Inheritance Tax and taxes on goods and services.

Paying tax

If you are employed, Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) will be automatically deducted from your salary (Pay As You Earn: PAYE), and you will not normally need to fill in a tax return each year. If you are self-employed, or have a substantial income from property or other means (for example, foreign income), you will need to fill out a self-assessment tax form, which you can do online at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/starting-work.htm

Tax year

The tax year in the UK runs from **6 April** until **5 April**.

If you come to settle in the UK in the middle of a tax year you will normally only have to pay tax on income from when you arrive, but there are exceptions to this.

2013–14 tax bands

The first £9,440 that you earn (your Personal Allowance) is not taxed. Your remaining income is subject to different rates of tax:

£0–£32,010 – 20 per cent (basic rate)

Above £32,011 – 40 per cent (higher rate)

For the latest tax bands and to find out more about UK tax regulations and your local tax office, visit the website for HM Revenue and Customs:

www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/basics.htm

Social security

Are you covered by social security in the UK?

This depends on your nationality and whether you have previously paid any UK National Insurance Contributions. If you are a national from the European Economic Area (EEA) you will normally be entitled to the same benefits as a UK citizen, provided you have the right to reside in the UK. EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/> and the European Union website Europa www.europa.eu have useful information regarding specific benefits and entitlements for EEA nationals. If you would like personalised advice in your own language, you can contact the Citizens Signpost Service <http://europa.eu/youreurope/advice/index.htm>

See also the UK Border Agency website for European nationals: www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/eucitizens/

If you are from outside the EEA, your home country may have a separate two-way social security agreement with the UK. You can find a list of these agreements on the Department for Work and Pensions website: www.dwp.gov.uk/international/

National Insurance Contributions

You pay National Insurance Contributions to build up your right to social security, benefits and a pension. NICs are automatically deducted from your wages or calculated from your self-assessment tax return. You pay a different class of NIC depending on your situation: if you're employed and earn over a minimum threshold, you pay Class 1 NICs; if you are self-employed you pay Class 2 NICs at a basic flat rate and Class 4 NICs as a percentage of your taxable profits. If you have gaps in your National Insurance record, or do not pay NICs because you are on a grant, you can pay additional voluntary contributions (Class 3 NICs) in order to maximise your UK pension.

National Insurance number

To get a National Insurance number you need to contact Jobcentre Plus on 0845 600 0643 (lines are open 08.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday). See also the Jobcentre Plus website: www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number

Pensions

There are several types of pension available in the UK, which fall into the three main categories outlined below. For more detailed information visit the Euraxess UK social security and pensions webpages: www.britishcouncil.org/new/euraxess/euraxess-living/euraxess-living-social-security-and-pensions/

State pension

The UK state pension consists of the basic state pension and the state second pension. Both depend on your National Insurance Contributions (NICs), but whereas the basic state pension is currently a flat rate, calculated according to the number of years of NICs payments, the state second pension is linked to how much you have earned and the amount of National Insurance paid. NICs are deducted automatically by your employer or paid through self-assessment if you are self-employed.

The state pension age can be between 61 and 68 depending on when you were born and whether you are male or female. You can calculate the age at which you can start claiming a state pension here: www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension

If you have paid NICs in the UK you should be able to claim the state pension even if you no longer live in the UK. However, the amount will depend on the number of qualifying years of NICs and the country in which you live.

Occupational pensions

Occupational pension schemes are also called work pensions or superannuation schemes. These are additional employer-led schemes in which both you and your employer pay contributions.

Personal pensions

You can take out a private pension with a pension provider and contribute yourself regularly. Some employers may also contribute to your personal pension.

Stakeholder pensions are a special type of flexible pension scheme in which you do not have to pay in a fixed amount of money each month and the management charges are low. Current legislation allows you to take out a stakeholder pension while resident in the UK and then continue paying into it for five years after leaving the UK to live elsewhere.

Transferring pension funds from abroad

Although it depends on the individual scheme, it is often possible to transfer funds from an existing private pension (either in the UK or abroad) into a UK pension plan. However, it may not always be profitable for you to do so, particularly if you do not plan to stay in the UK for long. You should contact your UK pension provider to discuss your options for transfer.

You can find information on pensions from Gov.uk: www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension and get advice from the Pensions Advisory Service: www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk



Qualification recognition

If you want to work, study or carry out research in the UK, you may need to confirm that your qualifications are recognised here. Exam bodies will give you information on recognition of their exams in the UK, from education institutions, professional bodies, employers or government departments. Exam bodies will also inform you of any equivalence or placement on qualification frameworks.

You can also find information on qualification equivalence and recognition on the website for UK NARIC, the National Recognition Information Centre:
www.naric.org.uk

Qualifications for training or studying in the UK

If you are planning to study or train in the UK, visit the British Council Education UK website: www.educationuk.org to find out about entry requirements for different courses. You may be required to demonstrate that your level of English is sufficient, in which case we can help you with an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam.



Research

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PhD status

In the UK, unlike in some other European countries, researchers studying for a PhD have student status. This means that if you are a PhD student you may be exempt from paying council tax (a local tax, set by councils to help pay for local services like policing and refuse collection) and you may qualify for student discounts and other benefits. You may also get extra support from the international office of the university where you are registered as a PhD student.



Funding

There are a number of different sources of research funding in the UK. Government research funds are allocated mainly through the seven **Research Councils**, which each cover a different research area (see box). There are also several large charities that support research (particularly medical research) such as the **Wellcome Trust** and **Cancer Research UK**. Some learned academies, such as the **Royal Society**, offer fellowships and travel grants for researchers. The rules about eligibility differ from scheme to scheme. Many researchers coming to the UK obtain funding from Europe, either through the European Commission's **Framework Programme** for research funding research or through independent organisations such as the European Molecular Biology Organisation (**EMBO**) and the Human Frontier Science Program (**HFSP**). The UK Research Office (UKRO – see box) provides comprehensive information about EU funding for research, including Marie Curie

Fellowships (see box below and see overleaf).

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) www.hefce.ac.uk is responsible for distributing public funds for higher education in England through both annual funding allocations and specific initiatives such as the Catalyst Fund, which aims to support significant changes in higher education that improve the environment and the experience for students.

From 2015 onwards, the allocation of funding to higher education institutions in the UK will be governed by the results of a major new system for assessment known as the Research Excellence Framework. This will take place during 2014 and will assess the outcomes, impacts and benefits of publicly funded research at UK HEIs www.ref.ac.uk

Euraxess UK has a unique funding database which enables you to search for fellowships, conference and travel grants as well as exchange funding opportunities www.euraxess.org.uk

The UK's Research Councils

Arts and Humanities Research Council

Supporting research in both the arts and humanities through research awards, postgraduate scholarships and knowledge transfer awards.
www.ahrc.ac.uk

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Council

Supporting all areas of bioscience research from molecules to systems, particularly in relation to food security, bioenergy and health.
www.bbsrc.ac.uk

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

Supporting a broad range of engineering and physical sciences research including in relation to energy and the environment, the digital economy and ICT.

www.epsrc.ac.uk

Economic and Social Research Council

Supporting a wide portfolio of research, training and knowledge exchange in the areas of business, economics and social sciences.

www.esrc.ac.uk

Medical Research Council

Supporting both basic and applied research in the health and medical sciences through research grants, studentships and fellowships.

www.mrc.ac.uk

Natural Environment Research Council

Supporting research and training in the environmental sciences through grants, fellowships and knowledge exchange initiatives.

www.nerc.ac.uk

Science and Technologies Facilities Council

Supporting research across a range of scientific disciplines including through

providing access to large-scale research facilities such as the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility and the European Southern Observatory.

www.stfc.ac.uk/home.aspx

Research Councils UK

A strategic partnership between the seven UK Research Councils, which aims to enhance the overall impact and effectiveness of their research.

www.rcuk.ac.uk

UK Research Office (UKRO)

The UK Research Office (UKRO) is the European office of the UK Research Councils. It provides information and an advice service on European Union funding for research and higher education, and is funded through subscriptions from the UK Research Councils, universities and other research organisations. UKRO provides up-to-date information on all funding opportunities through the European Commission's Research and Innovation Programme and other sources of funding for research and higher education from the EU and other European organisations. It is also the national contact point for Marie Curie Actions (European research grants). www.ukro.ac.uk

Career development

A career in research can sometimes be complicated and competitive. Researchers are frequently required to be highly mobile and flexible and are encouraged to consider a wide range of career options. The UK has a number of ways in which to support researchers in their career development. Researchers are encouraged to develop both their transferable skills (e.g. communication skills, management skills) and their research-specific skills. You can find out more by asking your human-resources department for advice and information, and by visiting the Vitae website: www.vitae.ac.uk (see box), which has a range of development opportunities and resources aimed at research staff and postgraduate researchers.

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The key instrument setting out policy on researcher career and mobility issues in the UK is 'The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers'. This follows the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers ('The Charter and Code'). The Concordat sets out the expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders. It consists of a set of key principles for the future support and management of research careers, which institutions are expected to put into practice.

Implementation of the Concordat is undertaken at the level of the individual higher education institution or other research organisation.

The Concordat's key principles:

1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
2. Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.
3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global-research environment.
4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.
6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.



HR Excellence in Research Award

As a way of recognising institutions that support researchers and promote open and transparent recruitment, the European Commission has introduced the 'HR Excellence in Research Award'. This award is given to research institutions and funding organisations that have made significant progress in implementing the Charter and Code. More than 70 UK universities have already received the award, a full list of which can be found at: <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4ResearcherOrgs>

Vitae www.vitae.ac.uk is a national organisation that champions the personal, professional and career development of researchers. It is funded by the UK Research Councils and UK higher education funding bodies and supports the implementation of the Concordat. Vitae works with higher education institutions and research institutes to provide doctoral researchers and research staff with development opportunities. Vitae also works with policy makers to develop policies around the interests of researchers and undertakes research to build the necessary evidence base to support policy development in this area.

Research policy

The UK is a world leader in research, second only to the United States in terms of the quality of research publications produced¹. However, to maintain this position, more investment and development of the research base is necessary. In December 2011 the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills launched a new Innovation and Research Strategy, which aims to boost economic growth through investment in research and innovation across the UK. This includes investing an extra £495 million in capital investment, including for graphene and high-performance computing, and the provision of research and development tax credits for small and large companies and grants for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to engage with research institutions. Another key part of the strategy is to support innovation and research collaboration overseas, especially in China and India.

Also in December 2011, the UK government launched its 'Strategy for Life Sciences' with the aim of becoming the global hub for life sciences by bringing together business, researchers, clinicians and patients to translate discovery into clinical use for medical innovation with the National Health Service.

Despite the global financial crisis, the UK government has reaffirmed the importance of science and innovation as a way to fuel future prosperity. In the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2013, while many other budgets were cut substantially, the government ring-fenced the science budget at its current level, £4.6 billion a year, until 2014–15.

Visit Euraxess UK for more information about UK and European science policy: www.euraxess.org.uk (research – industry research and development).

¹ Measured by numbers of citations. Top 20 countries in all fields, 2000–10. sciencewatch.com Thomson Reuters.

Industry

The UK has a thriving private sector, and the government has a range of incentives that support innovation and investment in research and development. There are many different business sectors with large research and development activities. If you are considering a research career in industry, the UK has much to offer. Key sectors investing heavily in research and development are: aerospace and defence, the automotive industry, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, the chemical industry, electronics, telecommunications and information technology, and healthcare.

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has produced the Lambert Toolkit for Collaborative Research to assist companies and universities in negotiating collaborative agreements, with model agreements that can be adopted by individual parties and research consortia.

See: www.ipo.gov.uk/lambert

For more information about research and development in industry, visit Euraxess UK: www.euraxess.org.uk (research – industry research and development).



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Innovation

The UK government has a number of initiatives to increase the interaction between academia and business, and offers support to universities and researchers who wish to commercialise their research. In 2012, the chancellor announced eight 'great technologies' that would be priorities for receiving £600 million of extra science funding: big data (computing), space, robotics and autonomous systems, space, synthetic biology, regenerative medicine, agricultural science, advanced materials and energy. The independent Technology Strategy Board provides a range of support for research and development and innovation, including grants and support for knowledge transfer, and is establishing a network of elite Catapult Centres to commercialise research and development in new and emerging technologies. These centres involve collaborations between universities and business, transforming the UK's capability for innovation in specific technology areas and helping to drive future economic growth. The first centre, focused on high-value manufacturing, was announced in January 2011, followed by another six centres covering cell therapy, digital economy, future cities, renewable energy, satellite applications and transport systems. See: www.catapult.org.uk

Intellectual property

Even if you have no links to business, you may find it helpful to know about intellectual property (IP) in case your research leads to a patentable or exploitable invention or discovery. IP is a term given to ideas or other creative or innovative subject matter, including discoveries and inventions, which could be patented. The rights to IP (IPR) can be owned by an individual or a group, and this allows them to control its use, or in some cases benefit from its application. Some types of IPR are owned automatically, as in the case of **copyright**, where the creators of a piece of literature, music, art, film, etc., automatically own the copyright to their material. For other types of IP the issue of who owns the rights could be more complicated. In the case of **patents**, this depends upon the situation in which the discovery or invention was made. If a researcher or student produces a potentially patentable or exploitable invention or discovery during their work at an institute or university, in most cases their employer would own the IPR. This means that the employer would assume the responsibility for claiming the IPR, and receive any benefits arising from these. However, many universities and institutes have revenue-sharing schemes or other policies to recognise and reward staff and students who perform research that produces IP-related revenue.

IP protection and commercialisation

Most universities are beginning to recognise the benefits that can arise from the commercialisation of research, and are working towards effective and responsible policies to manage it. Issues may come up when university-based research is performed in partnership with another external organisation or sponsor, but in general IPR will be agreed at the outset of the research. In response to the Lambert Review on the collaboration between universities and businesses, a set of model agreements on IPR have been created that can be adopted at the start of any collaboration. These make it clear who owns and has the right to exploit any IP arising from the research. In addition, as any knowledge regarding IP is potentially exploitable, employees and students must keep secret any confidential information to which they have access as an employee or student of the university.

You can find out more about research enterprise and intellectual property on Euraxess UK: www.euraxess.org.uk

Useful websites

UK Intellectual Property Office
www.ipo.gov.uk

Department of Business,
Innovation and Skills
www.bis.gov.uk/innovation

British Chambers Of Commerce
www.britishchambers.org.uk

Technology Strategy Board
www.innovateuk.org/

Working with animals

Experimentation on animals is highly regulated in the UK. If you plan to use animals for research you will need a personal licence, for which you will have to undergo training, and a project licence, which gives the details of your research. You can find out more by visiting the Home Office – Science and Research website (see below). In addition, the establishment where you carry out the experiments needs to be licensed under a certificate of designation.

■ Personal licence

The training that you must undergo before obtaining a licence is organised into modules. Even if you are an experienced researcher with a qualification in laboratory science from outside the UK, you will still have to complete one or more modules to ensure that you are familiar with UK regulations.

■ Project licence

If you are going to work on a project that is already running there should already be a project licence in place. However, if you plan to alter the number or type of animals to be used, or the experimental procedures, you will need to apply for an amendment to the licence. If you are starting a new project, you or your group leader must apply for a new project licence.

■ Certificate of designation

Every establishment that uses animals for research must hold a certificate of designation. The certificate holder is responsible for providing staff training and upholding appropriate standards of animal welfare. Contact the administration of the place where you work/intend to work to see if there is a certificate of designation.

Ethical considerations

The Medical Research Council (MRC) has produced updated guidelines on the ethical and legal aspects of using animals in medical research, 'Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research: Expectations of the major research councils and charitable funding bodies (2013)', which is available online at: www.mrc.ac.uk

Animal rights extremist groups

The animal rights movement is active in the UK, and contains some extremist elements. Although legislation exists to prevent the harassment of people carrying out legitimate animal research, in some cases it may be best not to discuss your research in public.

Home Office research and testing using animals: www.gov.uk/research-and-testing-using-animals

Working with humans or human tissue

Any research involving human subjects, human tissue or biological samples is subject to strict regulations and guidelines. If you plan to work with humans or human tissue, make sure you are fully aware of all of the regulations. The MRC has produced a series of booklets outlining good clinical and laboratory practice, as well as on the legal and ethical issues surrounding the use of humans and human tissue.

Clinical trials

On 1 May 2004, the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 came into force. This helps to protect the rights, safety and wellbeing of clinical trials subjects. A short description of the regulations is available online at the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency website: www.mhra.gov.uk



Research using human embryos or embryonic stem cells

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority www.hfea.gov.uk is responsible for regulating UK research involving human embryos, including all work on human embryonic stem cells. Any work involving embryos or embryonic stem cells must be performed under a project licence, but personal licences for individual researchers are not necessary. For more information see: www.hfea.gov.uk/190.html

Laboratory safety

Safety in the laboratory is primarily the responsibility of the employer, and different institutes may differ slightly in their policies, although all must adhere to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH). You may find it useful, however, to be aware of the additional training or record-keeping that may be necessary in certain lines of scientific research. To find out more, visit the Health and Safety Executive and DEFRA websites (see below).

Working with radioactivity

Most universities and institutes have their own local policies on the use of radioactivity, so check these with your employer. You may be required to undergo a training course before you start to work with any sources of radioactivity, and when you do start work you will need to be monitored to ensure that you are not being overexposed.



Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

There are strict regulations controlling the generation and use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), in order to protect the environment and ensure the health and safety of researchers and the public at large. The legislation depends on whether the GMOs are contained, for example in a laboratory, or released into the environment.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regulates the use of contained GMOs and places legal requirements on anybody who works with GMOs in a contained unit. These requirements focus on risk assessment and accurate record keeping, and can be read in detail on the HSE website (see below).

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the devolved Departments of Agriculture are responsible for regulations regarding the deliberate release of GMOs into the environment and you can find more information on the DEFRA website (see below).

Risks for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding

The laboratory environment may be associated with extra risks for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, for example exposure to radioactivity, solvents or teratogenic substances. If you are pregnant or have given birth within the past six months you should notify your employer and they must carry out a risk assessment specific to you, taking into account any advice given to you by your doctor or midwife. Any identified risks to you or your child must be removed or controlled. You can contact the Health and Safety Executive (see below) for more details on this subject.

Useful websites

Health and Safety Executive
www.hse.gov.uk

Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
www.gov.uk/defra

Research in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Science in England

England is the largest and most populated country in the United Kingdom and most issues, including those relating to science and technology policy, are ruled directly by the UK government in London, with policy set by the Government Office for Science (GO-Science).

The best-known scientific centres in England are **Oxford, Cambridge** and the capital, **London**, and between them these three cities host some of the world's best research institutes. However, excellent science is not confined to these regions: world-class research institutes and universities operate in many UK cities and towns.

Several initiatives in recent years have aimed at creating pools of talent and expertise and encouraging collaboration around specific topic areas. In 2013, for example, the UK government launched the Agri-tech Leadership Council to bring together the UK's science base, food and farming industries to identify and develop opportunities for exploiting agricultural technologies. As part of this, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council is disbursing £30 million to support research and innovation campuses focused on agricultural science and technology.

In 2010 the Technology Strategy Board launched a network of seven technology and innovation centres called **Catapult Centres** whose role is to attract industrial and collaborative funding towards translating ideas into products and services. The seven areas to benefit are: cell therapy, digital economy, future cities, high-value manufacturing, renewable energy, satellite applications and transport systems: www.catapult.org.uk

Meanwhile, six 'Science Cities' established in 2005 continue to develop their own strategies for collaboration and investment between universities and industry, in **Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham** and **York**, and each has its own strategy and areas of expertise.

Universities and research council institutes

There are more than 100 universities in England and you can find out about them on the Education UK website: www.educationuk.org

Through the Research Councils UK (RCUK), the UK government disburses funding for university-based research and supports separate research institutes each specialising in different areas of science and technology: www.rcuk.ac.uk

Government departments,
agencies and institutes
Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs
www.defra.gov.uk

Food and Environment Research
Agency (FERA)
www.fera.defra.gov.uk

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and
Aquaculture Science
www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/

Animal Health and Veterinary
Laboratories Agency (AHVLA)
www.vla.defra.gov.uk

Science Advisory Council
www.defra.gov.uk/sac/

Technology Strategy Board
www.innovateuk.org

National Physical Laboratory
www.npl.co.uk

Defence Science and
Technology Laboratory
www.dstl.gov.uk

Meteorological Office
www.metoffice.gov.uk

Independent research organisations

There are many independent research
organisations in England, listed on the
RCUK website, for example:

Cancer Research UK
www.cancerresearchuk.org

European Bioinformatics Institute
www.ebi.ac.uk

Tyndall Centre for Climate
Change Research
www.tyndall.ac.uk

Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
www.sanger.ac.uk



Science in Scotland

Although Scotland is a relatively small country, its output in terms of scientific research is outstanding. It has just 0.1 per cent of the world's population but produces one per cent of the world's published research, ranking very highly in terms of research citations per capita. Some 55 per cent of this comes from international collaboration, the highest of any country in the world. Scotland is particularly successful in medicine and biosciences, energy research (including renewables) and computer sciences. An impressive 86 per cent of all research in Scottish universities is rated as being of international quality or higher (Research Assessment Exercise 2008).

Scottish academics can compete for research funding with their counterparts throughout the UK. In 2011–22, they received 15 per cent of UK government funding, 14 per cent of UK industrial and charitable funding and 12 per cent of EU funding for research in the UK. This compares very favourably with Scotland's 8.5 per cent share of the UK population (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2013).

Useful websites

The Scottish Government
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/science

Scottish Enterprise
www.scottish-enterprise.com

Scottish Funding Council
www.sfc.ac.uk

Scottish Institute for Enterprise
www.sie.ac.uk

The Royal Society of Edinburgh
www.rse.org.uk

Science Scotland
www.sciencescotland.org

Science policy

Scotland has its own devolved Parliament, and the Scottish government is responsible for issues such as education and health. The government's 'Science for Scotland' strategy focuses on:

- developing, attracting and retaining skilled and talented people
- maintaining and growing capacity for world-class scientific research
- stimulating the co-creation and exploitation of knowledge for economic benefit; closing the research and development funding gap between the public and private sector and building product development capacity

- promoting the image of Scotland as a vibrant centre of scientific excellence, enterprise and endeavour.

Research pooling and collaborative science

A strong collaborative atmosphere exists between Scotland's universities and research institutes. Research facilities and expertise are often shared between different institutions so that scientists and students have access to the best opportunities for furthering their research and education. The research pooling initiative was created by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in 2003 to encourage researchers across Scottish higher education to pool their resources and respond to increasing international competition. Research pooling has been implemented in various fields including **chemistry, physics, economics, engineering and mathematics, geosciences, environment and society, and the life sciences** and encourages cross-disciplinary research.

Link to research pools:

www.sfc.ac.uk/research/researchpools/researchpools.aspx

Innovation Centres

Building on the success of research pooling, recent experience in driving improved knowledge exchange and the development of the Technology Innovation Centre (TIC) in Energy, the SFC in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise will establish Innovation Centres (ICs) relevant to sectors of strategic importance to Scotland's economy and society. ICs will create sustainable and internationally ambitious open communities of university staff, research institutes, businesses and others to deliver economic growth and wider benefits for Scotland. In September 2013 three ICs had been funded with others expected in future. The first three ICs are linked to the following three administrative hubs:

- Stratified Medicine Scotland – University of Glasgow
- Centre for Sensors and Sensor Imaging Systems (CENSIS) – University of Glasgow
- Digital Health Institute – University of Edinburgh.

Technology and enterprise

Scotland has a good reputation for the transfer of knowledge from the research base to industrial and commercial applications. The Scottish Institute for Enterprise helps university students to start their own business and social enterprises. Scotland also has the highest number of spin-out companies per head of population in the UK with 28 per cent of the total (Praxis Unico, 2013) Spin Out Survey Annual Report 2013). Scottish universities comprise five of the top ten most active UK institutions in terms of spin-outs. In comparison with the United States, the Scottish sector is a world-leader in this area. (Exploitation Efficiency Report 2009–10, University of Edinburgh, 2012)

Scottish universities

University of Aberdeen
www.abdn.ac.uk

University of Abertay Dundee
www.abertay.ac.uk

University of Dundee
www.dundee.ac.uk

University of Edinburgh
www.ed.ac.uk

Glasgow Caledonian University
www.gcu.ac.uk

Glasgow School of Art
www.gsa.ac.uk

University of Glasgow
www.gla.ac.uk

Heriot Watt University
www.hw.ac.uk

Edinburgh Napier University
www.napier.ac.uk

The Open University (Scotland)
www.open.ac.uk

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
www.qmuc.ac.uk

University of the West of Scotland
www.uws.ac.uk

Robert Gordon University
www.rgu.ac.uk

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
www.rcs.ac.uk

SRUC – Scotland’s Rural College
www.sruc.ac.uk

University of Stirling
www.stir.ac.uk

University of Strathclyde
www.strath.ac.uk

University of St Andrews
www.st-andrews.ac.uk

The University of the Highlands
and Islands
www.uhi.ac.uk

Scottish Research Institutes

Beatson Institute for
Cancer Research

www.beatson.gla.ac.uk

James Hutton Research Institute

www.hutton.ac.uk

Moredun Research Institute

www.moredun.org.uk

The Roslin Institute

www.roslin.ed.ac.uk

Rowett Institute of Nutrition
and Health

www.abdn.ac.uk/rowett/

Science in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA) does not have a specific department or policy for science alone but in 2008 the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Industry launched its first Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland in which science and technology play an important role. Furthermore, the NIA's All Party Group on Science and Technology aims to raise awareness about important developments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Through its universities and academia/industry collaborations, Northern Ireland is actively promoting education and research and development, especially in the areas of biomedical sciences, nanotechnology, sensors, forensic science, astronomy, electronics and engineering.

Academia

The **Research Institutes and Centres of Excellence** at Northern Ireland's **Queen's University, Belfast**, and the **University of Ulster** are staffed by high-calibre doctoral and postdoctoral researchers and technical support staff. As well as 'blue skies' research, the two universities focus on strategic and industrial-related work. Examples are the **Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology (ECIT)** at Queen's University and the **Intelligent Systems Research Centre** at the University of Ulster.

Queen's University Belfast is a member of the elite Russell Group of UK universities, an association of 24 major research-intensive universities which includes the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol, Edinburgh and University College London.

Academia/industry collaboration

Connected is an initiative funded by the Department for Education that introduces businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to potential partners in universities and colleges to encourage collaboration and sharing of knowledge and expertise.

Invest Northern Ireland is the region's economic development agency, which strongly supports innovation and encourages businesses to invest in research and development. Among other things, it runs programmes for industrial research, knowledge transfer, technology collaboration and support for research infrastructure with a view to commercialisation. The business-led Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel, **MATRIX**, advises government, industry and academia on the commercial exploitation of research and development and science and technology in Northern Ireland. Key areas are advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, ICT, agriculture and food production, life sciences and health, telecommunications and sustainable energy.

The Northern Ireland Science Park

The Northern Ireland Science Park Foundation Limited (NISP) is a self-sustaining, world-class knowledge-based science park in Belfast that houses a community of knowledge-based enterprises, from small start-ups to established companies.

Universities and Research Centres in Northern Ireland

Armagh Observatory
www.arm.ac.uk

Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
www.afbini.gov.uk

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
www.cafre.ac.uk

Colleges Northern Ireland
www.anic.ac.uk

Forensic Science Northern Ireland
www.fsni.gov.uk

Open University in Northern Ireland
www.open.ac.uk/choose/ou/ony_r12

Queen's University, Belfast
www.qub.ac.uk

Sonic Arts Research Centre
www.sarc.qub.ac.uk

University of Ulster (four locations)
www.ulster.ac.uk

Other useful websites

Connected

www.connected.ni.org

Invest Northern Ireland

www.investni.com

Northern Ireland Science Park

www.nisp.co.uk

Matrix Northern Ireland's
Science Panel

www.matrix-ni.org

Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Investment

www.detini.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Assembly

www.niassembly.gov.uk

Science in Wales

In its Science for Wales strategy the Welsh government is committed to building a strong and dynamic science base that supports the economic and national development of Wales. The three priority areas for science are life sciences and health; low carbon, energy and environment; and advanced engineering and materials, all with a view to commercial application and sustainable development. Excellence in higher education and fundamental research are key elements in the Welsh science strategy, as well as supporting innovation through partnerships between academia and business. Through the Digital Wales Research

Hub the Welsh government is bringing together industry, universities and funding bodies to promote research and development of digital technologies in Wales.

Useful websites

Official Gateway to Wales

www.wales.com

Welsh government

www.wales.gov.uk

Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

www.hefcw.ac.uk

Higher Education Wales

www.hew.ac.uk

EADS Foundation Wales

<http://eadsfoundation.com>

Priority areas

Building on areas where Wales already has a track record of excellence, the Welsh government identifies three 'Grand Challenge' priority areas: life sciences and health; low carbon, energy and environment; and advanced engineering and materials. This is supported by the Ser Cymru (Stars Wales) initiative, which will establish national research networks, each led by a specialist director, in the three Grand Challenge areas. Ser Cymru will also attract global 'stars' to work in Wales, principally for the three Grand Challenges.

Industry/academia collaboration

Wales has a network of world-class research centres with a track record for successful collaboration with industry. These carry out a wide range of research, from marine sciences to advanced software systems.

Swansea University's science and innovation campus (to be completed by September 2015) will be a world-leading example of this approach by bringing together academics, students and industry partners.

Universities/research centres

Aberystwyth University

www.aber.ac.uk

Bangor University

www.bangor.ac.uk

Cardiff University

www.cardiff.ac.uk

Cardiff Metropolitan University

www.cardiffmet.ac.uk

Glyndŵr University

(NE Wales Institute)

www.newi.ac.uk

The Open University in Wales

www.open.ac.uk

Swansea University

www.swan.ac.uk

Swansea Metropolitan University

www.smu.ac.uk

University of South Wales

www.southwales.ac.uk

University of Wales –

Trinity Saint David

www.trinitysaintdavid.ac.uk

Centre for Alternative

Technology (CAT)

www.cat.org.uk

Techniums

Technium is a network of innovation centres where companies can access technical, financial and research expertise. There are currently four techniums in Wales:

Technium Swansea

Technium OpTIC – St Asaph

Digital Technium – Swansea

Technium Springboard – Cwm





Families

- Immigration status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Childcare
- Education
- Benefits

Immigration status

If you are from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and have a visa to enter the UK to study or work, your spouse or partner and any dependent child under 18 should be allowed to join you in the UK although they must apply separately for a visa. You will also have to prove that you can support them adequately. Your children may not be allowed to join you if their other parent remains abroad, unless you have sole responsibility. If you and your spouse, partner or children are all from within the EEA, they are free to join you in the UK without a visa. If you are from within the EEA, but your spouse or partner and

children are from outside the EEA, they will need to apply for an EEA family permit in order to travel with you to the UK.

In most cases a civil partner has the same rights as a spouse. Even if your partnership is not registered, if you can prove that you have been living together as if married for two years or more (bank account details, rental agreements, etc.), you will often be treated in the same way as married couples. For more information visit: UK visas www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/



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Pregnancy and maternity

The **gov.uk** webpages have lots of information for parents and prospective parents, including the kind of scans and screening tests that are available and advice on healthy eating during pregnancy, and postnatal support. The **National Childbirth Trust** offers advice and practical support through its local branches, which organise antenatal classes, mother and baby groups and practical support.

Children born in the UK do not have the automatic right to British Citizenship but if you are ordinarily resident in the UK and are not restricted in your length of stay, your child might be granted citizenship. To find out more contact the **Border and Immigration Agency**. Under British law, a child can hold dual nationality, but this may not be possible in certain other countries. You should therefore check with your country of origin about dual nationality.

Useful websites

Gov.uk information on parenting
www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages

National Childbirth Trust
www.nct.org.uk

Border and Immigration Agency
www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk

Parental rights

For full and up-to-date details of parental rights visit the gov.uk section on births, deaths, marriages and care. A brief summary of your rights as an employee is given below using 2013 figures. To qualify you must have been in employment and paid a minimum amount of national insurance contributions, either in the UK or in another EU country, for at least 26 out of the 66 weeks before your baby is due. If you have a personal fellowship you would not normally qualify. To find out more visit the gov.uk website or your local Jobcentre plus.

For all entitlements such as maternity leave, parental leave, etc. you must inform your employer of your wish to take leave well in advance.

Maternity rights for employees

- Protection against unfair treatment or dismissal.
- Paid time off for ante-natal care.
- Maternity leave of 52 weeks.
- Maternity pay benefits, depending on your status:
 - Statutory Maternity Pay (**SMP**)
 - you should qualify for this if you earn an average of at least £109 a week and have been working for your current employer for at least 26 weeks up to the 15th week before your baby is due. SMP is currently 90 per cent of your salary for the first six weeks of leave and then for the next 33 weeks it is either £136.78 per week or the earnings related rate if this is less than standard-rate SMP.
 - Maternity Allowance (**MA**) if you don't qualify for SMP you might get MA, so long as you have worked (either on an employed or self-employed basis) for at least 26 of the 66 weeks before the week your baby is due, and earned at least £33 per week in any 13 of those 66 weeks. MA is currently £136.78 per week or 90 per cent of your average earnings, whichever is lower, and can be taken for up to 39 weeks.
 - Some companies have their own maternity pay schemes, which will

be at least as high as Statutory Maternity Pay.

- If you have recently come to the UK you may still qualify for maternity pay depending on your employer and the amount of insurance contributions you have made in the UK or certain other countries.
- You can find out more information at: www.dwp.gov.uk

Paternity rights for employees

- Paternity leave. You may be entitled to either one or two weeks paid paternity leave at any time up to the 56th day after either the birth or the expected date of birth if the child is premature. Paternity Pay is paid for one or two consecutive weeks at £136.78 or 90 per cent of your average weekly earnings if this is less. To qualify for this you must:
 - have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing
 - be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner
 - have worked continuously for your employer for 26 weeks into the 15th week before the baby is due
 - have earned £109 or more per week (before tax).

Adoptive parent rights

If you are adopting a child and are employed, you (or your partner if you have one) may be entitled to adoption leave (up to 52 weeks adoption leave and up to 39 weeks adoption pay). Adoption pay is again at a rate of £136.78 a week, or 90 per cent of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

Parental leave

This is different to maternity or paternity leave and allows you to take unpaid leave to care for your child. If you have been an employee at the same company for a year or more and are legally responsible for the upbringing of a child, you should be entitled to take up to 18 weeks unpaid

leave in total for each child up until their fifth birthday (or up to five years after the placement date of an adopted child). You cannot take more than four weeks leave in any one year. If the child is disabled you should be entitled to take up to 18 weeks leave until their 18th birthday.

For all of these entitlements you must inform your employer of your wish to take leave well in advance.



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Childcare

There are many types of childcare available, which differ in the environment in which the care is given, the age of the children cared for and the period for which the care is given.

Sure Start

Sure Start is the UK Government's programme to deliver the best start in life for every child by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support.

www.education.gov.uk/

Full-time childcare options

(these also offer part-time care)

- **Nannies** – provide childcare in your own home and can look after children of any age. Some parents share a nanny with others to reduce costs.
- **Childminders** – usually look after children under 12 in their own home and often collect school-aged children from a nearby school.
- **Day nurseries** – provide care for children from birth to four or five and beyond, often integrated with early education.

Occasional care or regular part-time care

- **Crèches** – provide occasional care for children under eight and usually charge on an hourly basis.
- **Toddler groups** – informal groups of parents that meet locally on a regular basis with children aged under five. These are normally free, or with a minimal contribution, but often require parents to be present.
- **Pre-schools and playgroups** – provide playtime and often early education to under-fives. Sessions last a maximum of four hours. Organised on a not-for profit basis so generally cheaper than day nurseries or crèches.
- **Out-of-school or 'kids' clubs** – offer children aged four to 12 a safe and stimulating environment in which they can play and learn outside school hours.
- **Babysitters** – offer occasional care in your own home, for example, if you want to go out in the evening.

Finding good-quality childcare

You can search for childcare all over the UK using the Childcare.co.uk website www.childcare.co.uk. You can also access reports on the quality of childcare from the government inspectorates:

England – Ofsted www.ofsted.gov.uk

Wales – Estyn www.estyn.gov.uk

Scotland – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education www.hmie.gov.uk

Northern Ireland – Department of Education, Northern Ireland www.deni.gov.uk

If you want to find a childminder you should contact your local Children’s Information Service, the details of which are on the Childcare.co.uk website.

Whatever type of childcare you choose for your child, you should ensure that it is has been approved and on the Ofsted Register www.nannytax.co.uk/ofsted-register, the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales <http://wales.gov.uk/cssiwsite/newcssiw/?lang=en>, the Care Inspectorate for Scotland www.careinspectorate.com and the Northern Area Children and Young People’s Committee in Northern Ireland www.northernchildrenservices.org/index.php

Help with childcare costs

All three and four year olds are entitled to 12.5 hours of free early education per week for 38 weeks a year. In addition, if you are eligible for Working Tax Credit there is an element that is based on childcare costs. Find out more on the gov.uk website.

Education

If you and your child have the right to reside in the UK, then your child should be entitled to a free education, which is provided by state schools. However, if your child will only be in the UK for a short period of time, the school has the right to refuse admission. Admission to schools is co-ordinated by the local education authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland. Some parents in the UK choose to send their children to independent schools (sometimes called public schools), which charge fees.

Education structure

School education in the UK is compulsory for all children aged five to 16. In England, beyond the age of 16 students must continue in education or training until the age of at least 17, either at school or a further education institute. All UK students may then go to university or other higher education institutes if they have achieved adequate grades.

- **Early years education.** Three and four year old children are entitled to free early years education, which consists of 12.5 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. This can be given by registered childcare providers, including childminders and day nurseries, as well as schools with nursery or reception classes.
- **Primary school.** Your child will usually attend primary school from the age of five to 11. During this time your child will follow the first two stages of the National Curriculum: Key Stages One and Two.
- **Secondary school.** When your child is 11 they will normally move to secondary school, where (up to the age of 16) they study Key Stages Three and Four. At the age of 16, children in England, Wales and Northern Ireland take GCSE exams (General Certificate of Secondary Education) in a range of subjects. In Scotland, pupils take Standard Grades instead of GCSEs.
- After 16, children can decide to study for A levels (or 'Highers' in Scotland), or a vocational qualification, or they can leave the school but must stay in education or training until the age of 17. They can continue their education at school or at a further education institute or Sixth Form College.

There are several government websites targeted at parents, where you can find out more about education in England www.gov.uk/browse/education, Scotland, www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone, Wales www.new.wales.gov.uk and Northern Ireland www.education-support.org.uk, including how to choose a primary or secondary school, and the differences between state and independent schools.

If you prefer to send your child to an International school, The European Council of International Schools www.ecis.org can provide information.

The UK Border Agency also has a special section on Education www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/support/education/

Higher education

Students wishing to continue their education after age 18 may apply to attend a university or higher education institute. Each university has its own admissions policy, and sets the minimum entry requirements for each of its courses. Students coming from abroad will have to demonstrate that their level of English is sufficient and that any qualifications they have are of equivalent value to those demanded by the individual university. There are different levels of fees for students depending on whether they are eligible to pay 'home' or 'overseas' fees. For more information visit the UKCISA (the Council for International Student Affairs) site: www.ukcisa.org.uk

Benefits

If you bring your children to the UK you may be entitled to financial help from the government in order to support them.

This comes in the form of **Child Benefit** and **Tax Credits**. If you are from the European Economic Area (or Switzerland) and have the right to reside in the UK, you will normally be able to apply for this financial support, although special rules may apply for nationals of accession states. Make sure that you have all the details of any previous child benefit that you have received from other countries.

If you are from outside the EEA, and your immigration status includes the condition 'has no recourse to public funds', you will not be eligible for Child Benefit and Tax Credits unless an agreement exists between your home country and the UK.

Child Benefit does not apply if you or your partner have an individual income of more than £50,000.

To find out more about Child Benefit and Tax Credits, visit the website of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs: www.hmrc.gov.uk

For more information about family issues and links to relevant websites visit the Euraxess UK website: www.euraxess.org.uk



Everyday life

- The cost of living
- Keeping in touch
- Culture and leisure
- Public transport
- Driving
- Politics and voting
- Safety
- Learning English

The cost of living

Here are some rough examples of prices in the UK at the beginning of 2014. Remember, prices vary considerably depending on where you are in the country and whether you live in the centre of a city, in the suburbs or in a more rural area.

Rent

Monthly rent for a one-bedroom furnished flat:

(2013 prices)

London: £600–800

Edinburgh: £400–700

Cardiff: £450–650

Belfast: £400–600

You will normally have to pay a deposit of one month's rent, which will be refunded at the end of the tenancy.

Council tax

Council tax is a local tax set by local authorities to help pay for services such as policing and refuse collection. The amount of council tax you pay depends on where you live and the size of the property you live in. It can range from around £400 to around £2,000 per year. Remember, if you are a PhD student or on a low income, you may be able to apply for an exemption from council tax, or a reduction.

You can find out more about this from the housing and local services section at: www.gov.uk

House insurance

The average annual premiums for buildings insurance (to cover the structure of the house) and contents insurance (to cover furniture, personal possessions, etc.) are around £150 and £100 respectively. However, prices vary depending on the provider and where you are in the country. If you live in private rented accommodation, buildings insurance is usually covered by the landlord, but you will probably have to take out your own contents insurance. Check with your landlord to find out exactly what you are covered for.

Utility bills

The average annual cost per household in the UK for gas and electricity is currently around £1,000. Water supplies may be metered or charged at a fixed rate.

Television licence

Everyone who has a television must purchase a television licence. A colour television licence currently costs £145.50 per year and you can pay monthly or yearly. You can find out more on the TV Licensing website: www.tvlicensing.co.uk

Food and drink

Loaf of bread (800g):	£1.30
Pint of milk:	£0.49
Bottle of wine:	£4 to £10
Pint of beer in a pub:	£3.00 to £3.50

Units of measurement

Although the metric system is in general use, some things are still described in imperial measures, such as distances (miles), volumes of drinks, like milk and beer (pints), and people's weight (stones).

1 mile = 1.6 kilometres

1 pint = 568 millilitres

1 stone = 6.35 kilograms

1 pound = 454 grams



Keeping in touch

When you come to the UK you will probably want to stay in close contact with friends and relatives from your home country. There are many ways of doing this, from calling directly via your computer to posting an old-fashioned letter.

Calling abroad

If you will be calling abroad a lot it is cheaper to avoid using your landline. There are several ways of calling abroad cheaply, including:

- **International calling cards.** Buy a card that has a set amount of money on it and use it to call abroad. When the balance is used up you can often top them up. Sometimes these cards can be used from more than one country.
- **Additional international call providers.** This is where you have an account with an international calls provider, as well as your normal telephone provider, and you use a prefix before you dial abroad from your normal telephone. You receive bills from both providers.
- **Instant dial services.** These are where you do not have to create an account with a separate provider. You simply dial an access number from your normal telephone and then dial the international number. You will be charged only for the costs of the access number by your normal

telephone provider. This may also work with some mobile phone providers.

- **Calling by computer.** There are a number of freely available programmes, such as Skype, that allow you to make voice calls from computer to computer, without any cost. Some programmes also allow free calls from your PC to normal telephones in some countries, but you may have to pay a small amount to set up the service. Using your computer to telephone is probably the cheapest way to call abroad, and the quality of the connection is often very good.

Mobile phones

There are many different options if you would like to buy a mobile phone, with several large networks operating in the UK and various types of phone and contract. You should think about how much you will use your phone, and if you will not need it very often you may be better off with a 'Pay as you Go' account instead of paying monthly. The different networks offer a bewildering array of payment plans and it is advisable to shop around before you buy, particularly if you will be calling to or from other countries a lot, as the networks' charges differ for international calls and roaming. Keep an eye out for promotions, which are constantly changing.

Internet connections

The internet in your home will cost between £15–£25 per month. There are two main types of internet connection in the UK, dial-up and broadband. You should think about how much you will use the internet, and whether you will be downloading large files before you decide on a provider.

- **Broadband.** There is a monthly charge and you can use the internet at any time. You can often get packages that include free off-peak phone calls. Broadband connections are much faster than dial-up connections. Remember to check whether the download restrictions fit your requirements. Some providers also offer internet by cable, independent of the telephone line.

Some providers offer packages that include internet, telephone, television and mobile phone.

The postal system

There are **post offices** in most towns and cities, and these offer a variety of services. As well as sending letters and parcels by Royal Mail, you can pick up many official leaflets and application forms (e.g. International Driving Licence) at your local post office. You can send letters by posting them in the red post boxes that are found everywhere; these tell you when the collection times are, and whether there is a later collection at another location, in case you have missed the last post.

The Post Office, or Royal Mail for parcels, offer different classes of delivery depending on when you want the post to arrive. First-class mail should arrive the next working day; second class should arrive by the third working day after posting. The price of postage depends on the size and weight of the letter, as well as the class of delivery, and you can check the current prices by visiting the **Royal Mail** website: www.royalmail.com/ or the Post Office website: www.postoffice.co.uk/

Sending mail abroad

Airmail

Airmail usually arrives within three days to Western Europe, four days to Eastern Europe and five days for the rest of the world.

Surface mail

Surface mail takes much longer to arrive than Airmail: around two weeks to Western Europe, four weeks to Eastern Europe, and eight weeks to the rest of the world. You cannot send letters to Europe using surface mail, but you can send packages. If you are sending heavy packages that are not urgent it may be worth using surface mail.

Urgent or valuable mail

If you have urgent or valuable mail to send you could use one of the Post Office's special-delivery services. If you need a guaranteed delivery within a certain time, consider using courier services such as Parcelforce, which often have next-day delivery to major European cities and delivery within two to three working days for other destinations.

For more information about the different delivery services available, visit the **Royal Mail** website: www.royalmail.com or the Post Office website: www.postoffice.co.uk

Time zone

In winter, the time zone for the UK is Co-ordinated Universal Time (**UTC**).

On the last Sunday in March **British Summer Time** starts (**UTC + 1**), when the clocks go forward by one hour. British Summer Time ends when the clocks go back one hour on the last Sunday of October.

Climate and clothing

The UK has a temperate climate with few extremes. But the weather here is famously changeable, so be prepared. It can be quite wet and cold in the winter with temperatures between 1 and 5°C (roughly November to March), so a warm coat, hat, scarf, gloves and an umbrella are a good idea. It also gets dark early.

Summers can occasionally be showery and overcast, but are mostly pleasant and rarely extremely hot. Temperatures between May and August can range between 14 and 30°C. The days are long and it stays light until late in the evening.

Rain

The amount of rainfall depends on where you are in the country and some parts are surprisingly dry. The county of Essex in the southeast sometimes receives less than 45cm of rain in a year – less than the annual rainfall in some Mediterranean countries. On the other hand, the Lake District in the northwest has an average annual rainfall of more than two metres.

Culture and leisure

The UK has a strong cultural heritage and has produced world-famous artists, poets, playwrights, musicians, authors and designers. Whatever your interests, you're sure to find something that's worth spending your free time on.

Museums

The UK has museums dedicated to a multitude of subjects, from science to fine art, childhood to dungeons. Many museums are free to enter, although they often charge for temporary exhibitions. To search for a museum by topic or area, visit: www.culture24.org.uk

Science events

There are plenty of science-related events in the UK, from informal discussions such as Café Scientifique www.cafescientifique.org, to public lectures and science festivals. Visit the Association for Science and Discovery Centres at: www.sciencecentres.org.uk



Theatre

William Shakespeare is one of the most famous Englishmen of all time and his plays are still enjoyed today in theatres throughout the UK. This includes the famous **Globe** theatre in London, a replica of the 16th-century wooden theatre where some of his plays were first seen. UK theatre is not limited to historical works, however, but is also renowned for contemporary plays and musicals, with London rivalling New York when it comes to theatre and stage shows. Works from all over the world are performed in the UK, which has itself produced some of the finest talents of the 20th century, including composers such as Andrew Lloyd Webber (*Evita*, *Cats*, *the Phantom of the Opera*, etc.), and renowned playwrights like the 2005 Nobel Laureate, Harold Pinter.

Although London is arguably the theatrical hub of the UK, there are plenty of world-class venues and stage companies outside London; for example, the **Grand Opera House** in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the **West Yorkshire Playhouse** in Leeds, **Edinburgh Playhouse** in Edinburgh and the **Royal Shakespeare Company** in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Opera

Opera has flourished in the UK over the past few years, with innovative shows attracting new audiences. Venues include the **Royal Opera House** in London and the **Wales Millennium Centre** in Cardiff, home to the Welsh National Opera.

Dance

You can see world-class dance performances from classical ballet productions to contemporary dance. The **Rambert Dance Company**, established in 1926, is Britain's flagship modern dance company, showcasing work from established international choreographers as well as introducing challenging and innovative new pieces. The company tours Britain regularly and is also associated with the famous Sadler's Wells theatre in London. For more traditional dance, you could visit the **Royal Ballet** in London, or try to catch a performance from one of the excellent touring ballet companies, such as the **English National Ballet** or **Scottish Ballet**.

Edinburgh Festival

There is a cluster of festivals occurring in Edinburgh around the end of August, which are collectively known as the Edinburgh Festival. They include the original **Edinburgh International Festival** of theatre, opera, music and dance; the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe**, which is now the world's largest arts festival and includes comedy, music, drama and dance; the **Edinburgh Military Tattoo**; the **Edinburgh International Film Festival**; the **Edinburgh International Book Festival**; the **Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival**, and several others.

Comedy

British comedy is a world-wide export and there are many places throughout the UK where you can see up-and-coming comedians in live comedy shows. From stand-up evenings in pubs, to cabarets, to tours of world-famous comedians, you can immerse yourself in the UK's long tradition of comedy. For news, reviews and listings of comedy events, visit: www.chortle.co.uk

Visual arts

There are many art galleries in the UK catering for all tastes. Possibly the most famous are the **Tate galleries**: Tate Britain and Tate Modern, both in London; Tate St Ives in the southwest of England; and Tate Liverpool in the northwest. You can find out more about these online at: www.tate.org.uk and you can search for other galleries in different regions of the UK at: www.culture24.org.uk

Literature

Literature and books are celebrated throughout the UK in public talks, exhibitions and literary festivals. Hay on Wye, a small Welsh village on the English border, is famous for its international literary festival, which has been called 'The Woodstock of the mind'. You can find out about the **Hay Festival** online at: www.hayfestival.com. Most cities have book festivals, for example, check out Belfast's Book Festival, which runs every summer: www.belfastbookfestival.com If you would like to go to a one-off public lecture, take a look at **The Lecture List**: www.lecturelist.org, which has a searchable database of public talks all over the UK.

Television

Digital terrestrial television in the UK encompasses over 100 television, radio and interactive services broadcast via the UK's terrestrial television network and receivable with a standard television aerial.

Film

As well as the usual blockbusters, some cinemas in the UK regularly show alternative or art-house films and you can find these by checking the film listings in the local newspaper. International films are normally shown in the original language with subtitles, rather than being dubbed. There are also several film festivals throughout the UK, including the **London Film Festival**, the **Edinburgh International Film Festival** and the **Belfast Film Festival**. Find out more about films and the movie industry from the **British Film Institute** website: www.bfi.org.uk

Music

The UK has a strong musical tradition and whatever your taste you should be able to find a gig that inspires you. You can often see new bands and performers for free in pubs or at free festivals, or you could visit one of the many music venues throughout the UK. London is an almost obligatory stopping point for most big bands on international tours and you can find music listings for London and the rest of the UK by checking the Gig Guide website: www.gig-guide.co.uk. You can buy tickets for most events online at: www.ticketmaster.co.uk

Heritage

Prehistoric monuments, medieval castles, Tudor palaces and aristocratic country houses – there are plenty of historical attractions to visit in the UK that bring to life its colourful past. The UK has 28 World Heritage sites including the Giant’s Causeway in Northern Ireland, Stonehenge in southwest England, the Old and New Town in Edinburgh, and the Castles of King Edward in Wales. The conservation organisations The National Trust www.nationaltrust.org.uk and The National Trust in Scotland www.nts.org.uk preserve many sites of cultural and historical importance and you can find out more about places to visit on their websites, or those for the national tourist boards.

Countryside

Although populous, the UK has plenty of natural beauty spots, from the World Heritage coastline in Dorset in the southwest, to the beautiful and remote Shetland Islands off the north coast of Scotland, where in winter you can watch the spectacular Aurora Borealis. There are currently 15 National Parks in the UK and 49 designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the National Trust protects a lot more of the UK’s countryside and coastline. To find out about places to visit near you, contact the tourist board for your area.

Tourist boards

Visit Britain: www.visitbritain.com

Visit England: www.visitengland.com

Visit Wales: www.visitwales.co.uk

Visit Scotland: www.visitscotland.com

Discover Northern Ireland:
www.discovernorthernireland.com

Sport

Sport has always been an important part of UK life. Whether you would like to take part in a sport yourself, or simply be a spectator, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in the UK's sporting life. The BBC Sport website: www.bbc.co.uk/sport has news, background information and features, as well as a calendar of sporting events, and if you'd like to get active yourself you can search for clubs and sporting venues at: www.sportsbase.co.uk

Public holidays

England and Wales

- New Year's Day (1 January)
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday)
- Easter Monday
- May Day (first Monday in May)
- Spring Bank Holiday (last Monday in May)
- August Bank Holiday (last Monday in August)
- Christmas Day (25 December)
- Boxing Day (26 December)

Scotland

As for England and Wales apart from:

- Extra bank holiday for New Year
- No Easter Monday holiday
- August Bank Holiday is at the beginning of August instead of the end.

Northern Ireland

As for England and Wales apart from extra holidays:

- St Patrick's Day (17 March)
- Battle of the Boyne (12 July)

Public transport

Getting around is generally quite easy in the UK, as it has an extensive public transport network. However, the costs of different types of transport are variable, and it is often cheaper to buy tickets in advance.

Rail

Britain's rail network connects over 2,000 stations around the country and trains are run by a number of different rail companies. You can normally buy a variety of tickets for your journey, which differ in the class of travel (first or standard class) and the flexibility of the ticket. The cheapest tickets are normally bought in advance and are only valid on specific trains, so if you miss your train you will have to pay extra to catch a different one. Find out the prices of single and return journeys, as for long-distance journeys there is no set rule as to whether a return is cheaper than two single tickets. For more information about rail journeys in the UK visit: www.nationalrail.co.uk or for low-cost fares check out: www.thetrainline.com



Coach and bus

Within most cities, towns and rural areas there is a local bus service for short- to medium-distance journeys. For longer-distance journeys there are scheduled coach services, mostly run by National Express www.nationalexpress.com and Scottish Citylink www.citylink.co.uk. Although normally slower than trains, coach services can be a cheap alternative to rail travel.

London Underground

Also known as the Tube, the London Underground is the world's oldest underground railway network. You can buy single, return or one-day travelcard tickets, but if you are staying for a few days or more, you should consider getting an Oyster card. This is a card that you top-up as needed, and it is valid on the Tube, as well as on London buses, trams and the Docklands Light Railway. It will always automatically calculate the cheapest fare for the journeys you make in a single day, and Oyster fares are always cheaper than paying in cash.

Boat

Ferry services connect Britain to mainland Europe, Ireland, the Channel Islands and to the numerous other islands around the British Isles. There is no single ferry operator, but to find details of some of the major routes you could try www.ferrybooker.com

To find out more about travel in the UK you can visit the www.gov.uk pages on travel and transport, where you can plan your journey in the UK and follow links to buy tickets online. If you live in London, or plan to visit there, you could also visit the Transport for London website: www.tfl.gov.uk

Special access for disabled people

The **Department for Transport** is aiming to improve access to public transport for disabled people but shortfalls do exist, for example in access to underground stations, which make some journeys more difficult for people with certain disabilities. A useful website is the **Transport for London** Accessibility page, where you can find information about travelling around London. If you are disabled and live in London you may be eligible for a freedom pass, which allows you to travel for free on London's public transport network.

Wherever you live in the UK, you can apply for a disabled person's railcard which, if you are eligible, allows you discounts of up to a third on rail tickets.

Useful transport websites

Government Travel and Transport pages
www.gov.uk/plan-your-journey

Department for Transport
www.dft.gov.uk

Transport for London
www.tfl.gov.uk

Driving



Bringing a car to the UK

You can bring your car to the UK but if you plan to use it for more than six months it must be registered and licensed in the UK. To find out how to do this visit: www.gov.uk/importing-vehicles-into-the-uk. If your car is new (under six months old) or you are bringing it from outside the EEA, you should contact HM Revenue and Customs, as you may need to pay import tax.

Before driving you must make sure you fulfil the legal requirements and be aware of the correct procedures before you drive in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

You must have a valid licence that allows you to drive in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). There are different arrangements in Northern Ireland. If you wish to drive you must find out if you can use your existing licence, which will depend on where your licence was issued. Information can be found at: www.gov.uk/non-gb-driving-licence

For anyone from outside the EEA: during the first year of your stay in the UK you can drive with a valid driving licence from your own country or an International Driving Permit, but after one year you must take out a provisional UK licence and put L plates on your car. You must then arrange to sit a full UK driving test. Until you pass your test, a person who holds a full UK driving licence must sit at your side whenever you are driving and you cannot drive on a motorway.

Driving in the UK

The car must be covered by insurance, registered and taxed and if it is over three years old, it must have an MOT certificate. GB licences are issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). If you have a driving licence that was issued in your home country, you must find out if you can use it to drive in Great Britain and how long it is valid for.

A guidance note – *Driving in England, Scotland and Wales: a guide for international students* – can be found at: www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Other-useful-information/Driving/

The Highway Code is a government publication that provides a summary of UK traffic law and has pictures of all the road signs in use in the UK (many of which are also used throughout the European Union). You can buy this at most bookshops or read it online at: www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code

While driving in the UK there are legal requirements that you must adhere to:

- If you are caught driving without insurance, road tax or a valid licence you will face prosecution and be fined.
- You must drive on the left-hand side of the road and overtake on the right.
- If you are riding a motorbike or moped you must wear a crash helmet.
- The driver and front-seat passengers must wear seat belts; rear seat passengers must wear seat belts where they are fitted.
- You must not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- You must observe all speed limits (30 miles per hour is usually the maximum speed limit in built-up areas).

- If you are caught speeding by a police officer or speed camera you will be fined and have points put on your licence.
- You will be barred from driving if you accumulate 12 points.
- You must observe the minimum age limits; the minimum age for driving a car or riding a motorcycle is 17 years of age.
- It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone or send or read text messages while driving.
- Remember, pedestrians have the right of way when on pedestrian crossings.
- More detailed information on these requirements can be found in *The Highway Code*.

Motor insurance

There are different types of motor insurance depending on the level of cover you require: some policies cover theft and damage to your car, but the cheapest insurance (and the legal minimum requirement) only covers third parties, i.e. if you harm someone or damage their property. You should shop around for different insurance policies from well-known providers; some offer cheaper premiums for people who use their car only at the weekends, and often the premium will depend on the area where you live.

MOT certificate

An MOT (Ministry of Transport) certificate states that your car is, at the time of the test, legally roadworthy and up to environmental standards. You can get an MOT from most garages, but make sure that they have the blue MOT logo. You can find out more about MOTs and when they are needed at: www.gov.uk/browse/driving

Vehicle tax

You can pay vehicle tax at any main post office if you bring your registration, insurance and MOT certificates with you. There is also a gov.uk section on vehicle tax www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax-rate-tables, where you can find out how much your road tax is likely to cost, along with other information.

Registering as a disabled driver/passenger

You can apply for a blue badge if you travel either as a driver or a passenger and have difficulty walking. This allows you parking concessions in some areas and enables you to park close to your destination.

Tolls on motorways and in cities

Some motorways, tunnels and bridges charge a toll.

There is a congestion charge in central London, which means that if you drive within a designated area between 07.00 and 18.30, on Monday to Friday, you will have to pay a fee of £10 per day. If you are a resident within the congestion-charge zone, have a car running on alternative fuel, or are a registered disabled driver, you may be entitled to a reduction. Visit the Transport for London congestion charge pages for more details.

Useful websites

DVLA www.dvla.gov.uk

Gov.uk www.gov.uk/browse/driving

TFL Congestion Charge
www.cclondon.com

Politics and voting



Parliament

The UK is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch as Head of State. Parliament consists of three parts, the **House of Commons**, the **House of Lords** and the **Crown**, and is responsible for making laws, examining the work of government, controlling finance, protecting the individual, examining European proposals, and debating. The public can only vote for Members of Parliament (MPs) to sit in the House of Commons; members of the House of Lords are normally appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Prime Minister (Life Peers), or are Bishops or Archbishops, Law Lords or Elected Hereditary Peers. Queen Elizabeth II,

as constitutional monarch, has the right to 'be consulted, to encourage and to warn', but her influence is mainly informal. She is required, on the advice of ministers, to assent to all Bills, and the Royal Assent (a sovereign agreeing to a measure becoming law) has not been refused since 1707.

At the end of the 20th century, legislation was passed by the UK Parliament to create devolved Parliaments/Assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Issues such as education and health are dealt with by the devolved governments, whereas areas such as defence and foreign affairs are still governed centrally.

Main political parties

There are three main political parties in the UK, the Conservative (or Tory) Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrat Party. Other political parties include the Green Party (focusing on environmental issues) and the national parties Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales) and the Scottish National Party. Northern Ireland has a number of political parties represented in the NI Assembly, namely: Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Féin, Ulster Unionist Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, Alliance Party, Green Party, Independent Health Coalition and Progressive Unionist Party.

Find out more about...

The Queen's role in government

www.royal.gov.uk

UK Parliament

www.parliament.uk

Scottish Parliament

www.scottish.parliament.uk

Welsh Assembly

www.wales.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Assembly

www.niassembly.gov.uk

How to vote in the UK

General parliamentary elections

Only British citizens, or citizens of the Irish Republic or Commonwealth countries living in the UK, are allowed to vote in General Parliamentary Elections.

Local and European elections

If you are a European Union citizen living in the UK, you can vote at local government, devolved legislature and European parliamentary elections. You can register to vote at local, national and European elections, and find out more about how to vote on the Electoral Commission website About my Vote:

www.aboutmyvote.com

Safety

By international standards, the UK is a safe country, with low levels of violence and street crime. However, as in most societies, there are sometimes risks to your person or your belongings and there are things that you can do to minimise these risks. There is a safety guide for international students called Comfort Zone, which is available on the Education UK website: www.educationuk.org It discusses issues such as safety on the streets, laws in the UK, using public transport or taxis and looking after your belongings.

The gov.uk pages on crime, justice and the law also have information about tackling crime, reporting minor crime incidents, victim support and practical advice about keeping safe and reducing crime: www.gov.uk/browse/justice

Useful contacts

Emergency services
(police/ambulance/fire)
Dial **999** or **112**

NHS Direct (for non-emergency
medical situations)
Dial **111** or **0845 4647**

Local police forces
www.police.uk/

Identity theft

You should also be aware of the growing cases of identity fraud in the UK. This is where people use your personal details to open bank accounts and get credit cards, loans, state benefits and documents such as passports and driving licences in your name. The Home Office has set up an identity theft website which gives you advice about how to protect yourself from identity theft (such as by destroying any documents with your personal details on), and tells you what to do if you believe you are a victim of identity fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk/fraud_protection/identity_fraud

Emergency numbers

If you are in an emergency situation, and need assistance from the police, the fire brigade or the ambulance service, you should call **999**, or alternatively **112** (which is the standard emergency number in Europe). If you need to contact the police in a non-urgent situation (such as reporting vandalism, etc.), you should call your local police station or you can dial **101**, a single non-emergency number which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In Northern Ireland you should dial **0845 6008 000**.

Learning English

If English isn't your main language, you can take a course to help you improve. These courses are called English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). They are at different levels and you can get advice about which course is best for you and where to study by calling the Get On helpline on **0800 100 900**. The phone lines are open 08.00–22.00 seven days a week. You can also visit the British Council Learn English website: <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/> to find out about English courses in the UK and the rest of the world, and access resources to enable you to learn English online.



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Checklist

Before you arrive

Once you get here

Before you arrive

- Check whether you need a visa, work permit or other documentation to allow you to work (e.g. accession worker card or registration certificate).
- Arrange accommodation (possibly via your employer).
- Inform your bank of your new address and ask them to send a statement to your UK address as soon as you have arrived (not before, as this could be a security issue).
- Ensure that you have your last three months of bank statements.

If you are bringing your family:

- Find out about childcare/schools in the area and register your child.
- Make sure you have all the details of any child benefit you are currently receiving.



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Once you get here

- Open a bank account.
- Fill in tax form P86.
- Visit your local tax office if you need advice on double taxation.
- Apply for a National Insurance number.
- Arrange to pay bills such as gas, electricity, water, council tax.
- If you have a television, get a television licence.
- Find out if your employer has a company pension scheme and whether it is worth you transferring any benefits from existing pension schemes.

- Register with your local GP (doctor).
- Arrange a telephone and internet connection.
- Arrange insurance (motor insurance, personal possessions, etc.).
- If you need to, apply for a UK provisional driving licence.
- Register to vote in local and European elections if you are eligible.

If you have brought your children:

- Enrol your child in school/childcare.
- Apply for Child Tax Credits or Child Benefit if you are eligible.

Useful contacts

The telephone numbers here are for calls from within the UK. From outside the UK remove the first 0 and prefix with the international dialling code for the UK (+44).

General

Emergency number (Fire/Ambulance/Police)	999
Euraxess UK email	euraxessUK@britishcouncil.org
Euraxess UK website	www.euraxess.org.uk
gov.uk (general information on several topics)	www.gov.uk
Pets helpline (bringing animals)	0870 2411710

Entry requirements

UK visas	www.gov.uk/uk-visa
Working in the UK	www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk

Health

NHS Direct (24-hour medical helpline)	111 or 0845 4647 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
NHS England	www.nhs.uk/nhsengland
NHS Wales	www.wales.nhs.uk
NHS Scotland	www.show.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Northern Ireland	www.hscni.net/

Working

HMRC (tax office)	www.hmrc.gov.uk
Financial Services Authority	www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk
Jobseeker Direct (finding a job)	0845 606 0234 www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job
Jobcentre Plus (arranging a National Insurance number)	0845 600 0643 www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number
Pension Advisory Service	0845 6012 923 www.pensionadvisoryservice.org.uk

Families

National Childbirth Trust	www.nct.org.uk
Ofsted (childcare and education in England)	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Estyn (childcare and education in Wales)	www.estyn.gov.uk
HMIE (childcare and education in Scotland)	www.hmie.gov.uk
DENI (childcare and education in Northern Ireland)	www.deni.gov.uk
Child Benefit helpline	www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit 0845 302 1444 (Great Britain) 0845 603 2000 (Northern Ireland)
Tax Credit helpline	0845 300 3900

Transport

Public Transport Traveline	0871 200 2233
National Rail Enquiries (train times and fare information)	0845 748 4950 www.nationalrail.co.uk
Transport for London	0843 222 1234 www.tfl.gov.uk
Congestion Charge for London	0845 900 1234 www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/congestioncharging/
Highways Agency (roads)	0300 123 5000 www.highways.gov.uk

Disclaimer

This guide was written in November 2013 and all the information derives from that period; therefore there may have been changes since that time. We do not assume liability for the contents. All contents are general in nature and cannot be binding in their cover of every individual case. They are neither necessarily exhaustive nor comprehensive, nor do they represent the status quo. As information they are not legally binding and cannot substitute for experts' information on the respective topic.



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