




ACROSS THE POND
STUDY IN BRITAIN • SINCE 2004

**AN UNDERGRADUATE
GUIDE TO STUDYING
IN THE UK**

A blue car is parked on a cobblestone street. The car's side mirror is decorated with a Union Jack flag. The car's reflection is visible on the wet pavement. In the background, other cars and buildings are visible, suggesting a city street.

WELCOME!

TO THE UK STUDY GUIDE
FOR UNDERGRADUATES

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Studying abroad is an exciting prospect for any student. Taking a leap of faith and studying away from your home country allows you to experience life in another culture, meet people from around the world, and encounter faculty and research facilities at some of the leading global universities.

If you are looking to earn your undergraduate degree abroad, then this eBook is for you! We have written this guide to logically break down everything you need to know to make your decision on whether getting your undergrad in the UK is for you.

“ I am so happy that I took this chance, moving half way around the world, for my studies. Across the Pond made the transition quite easy; I've made life-long friends, and couldn't imagine my life anywhere else.

Stefania Fulginiti, The University of York

MEET THE AUTHOR



Considering a move to the UK to study is a pretty big step in your life, but there is no need to worry, I know exactly how it feels!

Hi, my name is Ashley Jeanson, and I grew up in San Diego, California, before attending the University of Roehampton to get my MA in Education. Across the Pond made the entire process so simple that, before I knew it, I was living and studying in the UK. It turned into one of the most rewarding years of my life and I cannot recommend this opportunity enough to everyone I meet.

In this eBook, we will detail all the many ways Across the Pond supports undergraduates throughout the entire application process, from choosing the right university to landing on British soil. We will also answer students' most frequently asked questions.

After reading, if you have any further questions, don't hesitate to visit our website at studyacrossthepond.com and make an enquiry.

Ashley

WHY STUDY IN BRITAIN?

Studying abroad may seem like a costly upheaval compared to remaining in the US. There are, however, a host of benefits to studying in a different country. But, of all the countries of the world, why choose Britain?

TOP UNIVERSITIES

Great Britain is home to many top universities, whose degree programs are recognized around the world. Sixteen of the UK's universities actually rank in the top 100 higher educational institutions across the world (2015-16 Times Higher Education (THE)). Furthermore, out of the 800 universities featured, 78 institutions are from the UK.

Britain is well-known for its prestigious universities and high academic standards, so you can be sure that you won't have any problems returning to the US, or anywhere else in the world, to continue your education or seek employment.

COST AND TIME-SAVINGS

Most students assume it is extremely expensive to study in the UK, but this is not the case! More often than not, the cost of study is cheaper than in the US. There are many reasons for this, but in general, tuition is cheaper and degree programs are shorter, and these factors together significantly reduce the cost of education. The majority of UK countries offer a high quality undergraduate degree completed in just three years; this not only means that you save on time and money, but you get to start your career sooner!

Tuition fees in the UK are cheaper than that of private universities in the US and are on par with many public universities. You should expect to pay about \$15-25,000 for tuition fees and around \$10,000 - \$14,000 in living costs for each year of study in the UK. (Note these figures will fluctuate with the currency exchange rate and location of universities.) The higher tuition costs encompass specific laboratory science programs and the MBA; the higher living costs represents the expense of living in London.

It is worth mentioning that scholarship help is more widely available in the US than it is in the UK. The reason is simple: it is not as expensive to study in the UK, so the demand for scholarship money is not as great. Still, international students can benefit from scholarship help from British universities. These opportunities are generally merit-based and result in only a partial reduction in fees, but with tuition so inexpensive in the first place, even a partial scholarship makes a significant difference. We have up-to-date information on all our partners' scholarships and our own exclusive scholarships, which may not be available unless you apply through us. If you would like to find out more information, [please contact an Across the Pond advisor](#).

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Not only will you experience education from a prestigious institution, you will also benefit from professional exposure. British universities place a high premium on making students ready for the workforce immediately after graduating. They do this by equipping students with practical experience and through networking. The UK is the gateway to Europe and therefore offers students great international networking opportunities. Many times, universities will add an extra year to their degree programs so students take advantage of a year-long internship or work placement opportunity. This is called a "sandwich degree" and is unique to British universities.

Not only that, international students are permitted to work part-time while in the UK, which is another chance to acquire international work experience. If earning a degree from a British university is not enough to make your resume pop, the addition of international work experience could be the ticket.

PERSONAL GROWTH

The UK offers a multi-cultural and dynamic place to study, which results in tremendous personal growth. By removing yourself from familiar surroundings and studying alongside students from all over the world, you will make many new and important realizations, not only about the world, but also yourself, your opinions, beliefs and



even assumptions. While often challenging and maybe even humbling at first, students come to appreciate and value the personal growth they experience, which results in many qualities and skills that can be used to their advantage for the rest of their lives: open-mindedness, critical thinking, adaptation, and compassion.

It is not all about the time spent in academia; there is a wealth to be learned outside of the classroom as well. Education is all about exposure, and the UK is in an incredibly convenient location from which to travel to mainland Europe and the rest of world. Imagine how much you will be able to see, do and therefore learn with the chance to travel cheaply and easily with the UK as your home base, not to mention giving your family and friends an excuse to cross the Atlantic and adventure with you!

GLOBAL FRIENDS

Depending on which university you are considering, it is likely that anywhere from 20-30% of its student population is international, while the remaining 70-80% come from the UK. What an amazing network of students! Many American students return home from the UK with a friend on almost every continent.

Don't fall into the trap of mingling primarily with the other Americans on campus. Seek out multi-cultural friendships to gain exposure to people and cultures from across the globe. We are able to identify which of our partners have a high or low number of American students, depending on what kind of experience you plan to have.

All of these experiences will help you to stand out from the crowd when it comes to establishing yourself in your chosen career, either in Britain or back home.

“ I think you get out of the university experience what you put into it! You need to be open to learning in new ways from your peers and they will learn just as much from you - whether it's in the pub, over a pizza, or at one of the many university social events

Amelia Hagen, The University of Brighton





THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND UK UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

BRITISH UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS ARE MORE SPECIFIC

Whereas American degree programs focus on students acquiring a breadth of knowledge, sometimes requiring up to two years of general education classes before focusing on major coursework, British degrees focus on depth and hone in on a single subject from the very beginning of the program. This is the main reason why British degree programs are shorter, and it is perfect if you know what you want to study and want to get straight to the point! Depending on the university or the degree program you choose, you may still be able to take classes outside of your major, but there generally is not enough time to depart from major coursework significantly. Some programs are designed to let you combine multiple areas of focus, but the general rule is that British programs are far more engrossed in one subject than in the US.

American students sometimes struggle with this in-depth focus from the very beginning of their program because they are used to the freedom of declaring their major down the road, sometimes waiting until their third year of college to make that decision. If you are unsure what you would like to study, we recommend considering one of our Scottish university partners, as opposed to an English or Welsh one. This is because, like the American system, Scottish universities offer the four-year degree program. In fact, the American university system is based on the Scottish system. This extra year gives students more scope to explore their interests and experiment with different subjects. The only stipulation is that you must decide on a general area of interest, whether that be Business, the Sciences, the Humanities, and do your exploration within that subject area.

BRITISH UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS ARE MORE RESEARCH-BASED... IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Studying in the UK requires a different learning style to what Americans are typically accustomed. The difference can actually be summed up in one, concise sentence:

In general, US education tells students what to think, while in the UK, they are taught how to think. Let us explain this in a little more detail...

Firstly, in the US, students rely strongly on memorization, whether it be the content they read in their textbooks or what they hear from professors in class. They are then used to repeating these answers, almost by rote, on tests. British programs focus more on learning through your own research and developing your own opinions with the help and guidance of professors. You are not required to buy expensive textbooks for each class (another area of savings!); instead, you are given a "suggested reading list" (as opposed to a syllabus) and will only be as informed and prepared as you choose to be based on what is read outside of class. There is far more emphasis placed on your independent study outside of class with the focus being on learning how to present a well-argued and researched hypothesis or opinion.

Secondly, American students are used to, and perhaps depend upon, hand-holding or prodding from their professors, oftentimes having their overall grade docked if they skip class too many times. Their final grade is usually the accumulation of various quizzes, tests and assignments that are scattered throughout the semester or year. These multiple opportunities to affect one's grade minimizes the consequences of doing poorly on a quiz here or skipping a class there. In Britain, on the other hand, you tend to only be assessed once or twice during the semester. You typically have one piece of work during the semester and one assignment or exam at the end, which means your final grade depends on the performance of these items.

Because British programs are already intense and accelerated by nature and everything that is learned throughout the semester is tested only once, you automatically feel a strong sense of responsibility and



the weighty importance of not only attending each class but also paying careful attention and putting forth the very best at every opportunity. As a result, professors do not need to keep tabs on your work. Hours in class are comparable to those in the US but the format tends to be different; there are main lectures as well as smaller group tutorials.

WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN YOUR DEGREE

As stated earlier, the chance to spend a year in industry or in an internship is pretty common in the UK, and these opportunities are often built into the degree programs already. Naturally, these programs tend to be more competitive and have more rigorous entry requirements, but the option is worth considering. Not all of these placements are paid opportunities, but the value of experience cannot be quantified.



APPLYING TO THE UK AS AN UNDERGRADUATE

British universities offer a very wide range of subjects to study, and the options are inspiring. Your Across the Pond Advisor will first assess your academic background, test scores and personal interests, which helps them recommend the universities and programs that will best serve your academic and professional goals. This guidance and support is totally free!

Entry requirements are one area where students need and appreciate Across the Pond's expert help. Even though everyone is speaking English, entry requirements can often feel like another language! Additionally, requirements vary from one university to another, and even from one academic department to another. Having an expert by your side, navigating these requirements and matching you to those schools where you have a shot at success, is a great benefit.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

An understanding of British entry requirements for American students begins with an understanding of British education. By the time British students enter their Bachelor's programs, they have already declared and been studying their major subject exclusively for two years in the British version of high school called "A-levels." A-levels is a cross between high school and community college in the States and begin when British students are sixteen years of age.

At eighteen, when they enter their Bachelor's program, they already have a depth of knowledge an American student may not have in that subject as a freshman in college. This often means that undergraduates from the US can feel a bit behind at the beginning of their British Bachelor's degree.

To ensure they are not so behind that they will never catch up, universities create entry requirements to measure a candidate's likelihood of success in their program. These entry requirements do not focus on a student's GPA so much

as they focus on standardized test scores. This is because there is no national benchmark in the US for what a 3.5 or a 2.7 actually means. The value of these averages varies from school to school.

Therefore, British universities focus on test scores and have determined that the most equivalent American qualification to A-levels, or the closest US high school students can get to the rigors of A-levels, are Advanced Placement (AP) classes and tests. APs offer the level of focus and depth of knowledge that an A-level class would offer. So, if you are considering your education in the UK and have the opportunity to take AP classes in high school, do it!

However, AP classes are not always an option at American high schools. In instances like this, the next best score is the SAT-Subject or SAT-II tests. After that, British universities will consider the SAT-Reasoning (SAT-I) test, then the ACT. Obviously, the IB, or the International Baccalaureate, is the best type of score of all. Applying with an IB score is the most ideal because, as its name suggests, it is international. What a 36 means in the UK is exactly what it means in the US is exactly what it means in whatever country you want to go to school. The subject of entry requirements generates the most questions from students, and this is where personalized advice from your very own student advisor comes in handy.

Across the Pond are also expert at navigating each university; our advisors have a very good idea of what it will take to receive an offer, and what to expect once you are at university. A university that only had 40 places on a program this year may have 80 places available next year. Conversely, a program might reduce in size for various reasons, which will affect your chances of an offer. All of this and other changing circumstances in universities and departments may affect entry requirements from one year to year. With this in mind, Across the Pond advisors can help you find the most realistic and best suited university program for you.



DOUBLE-MAJORING

American students used to double-majoring at will in the States should be aware this is not always an option in the UK. Double majoring works differently in the UK in that the only way a student is allowed to study two subjects at once is if the university has already combined the two subjects themselves. If the two subjects are not combined by the school, a student unfortunately would not be able to combine them. The main reason is the focused nature of British degree programs. Because degree programs take less time, are more concentrated and focus solely on major coursework, universities have to make a specific, organized and intentional plan should they decide to combine two subjects.

OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND YOUR BRITISH UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE



WORK OR STUDY AT HOME OR ABROAD

After you have graduated from your Bachelor's in the UK, you can return home and start your career or continue your studies in the US system. Yes, that's right, your degree from the UK will most definitely impress US employers!

At the end of your British Bachelor's, you may be like many American students and not feel quite ready to return to the States. In this case, you can always consider pursuing your Master's degree in the UK. Just twelve-months long, as opposed to the two-years it takes to complete a graduate degree in the States, you will again be spending less time and money on your education, all the while benefiting from world-class education and expanding your international experience and exposure.

COMBINE INTERNATIONAL STUDY INTO YOUR PROGRAM

Why not add a semester or year in another country or organize an exchange?

If moving back home for a year within your studies is appealing, some university programs can accommodate for this.

Do you want to explore even more? Then a program where you can spend a semester or even a year in another country is another option to consider. From Italy to Singapore – the options are extremely broad!

Keep in mind that these types of programs tend to be very competitive, and may add on a year to your degree. Also, you will still continue to pay the UK university tuition fees.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Since 2004, Across the Pond has been providing free, personalized student advice and guidance to thousands of North American students looking to study at a UK university. Our team of UK Study Experts all have first-hand experience with studying in the UK and many used Across the Pond to help them do it.

We use this wealth of knowledge to ensure you are best matched in terms of your academic and personal goals. We represent over 40 universities across the UK, and you will benefit from a high acceptance rate to these institutions. We are able to offer a customized, free service because Across the Pond is funded entirely by our partner universities in Britain to represent them in North America.

Keep in mind that when you work with Across the Pond, we are on hand to help every step of the way, even once you are enrolled at your university. Should you enrol at one of our partners and feel it is not for you, we will be there to help you resolve any issues or look to make a transfer to the US after the first year, with the plan to study your second year at an American school.

We are confident that with our high level of personal guidance, you can maximize your chances of being accepted to some of the best universities in the UK – and the world! Our UK Study Experts' expertise and commitment are the cornerstone of Across the Pond, and it is because of these qualities that we continue to help you achieve your study goals overseas.

“ Without the help of Across the Pond, the selection, application, and preparation processes for UK study would not have gone nearly as smoothly as it did by using Across the Pond. They answered all of my questions fully, provided relevant materials and checklists, and even proofread some of my stuff with suggestions!

Sam Grate, The University of Newcastle

