

■ STUDY ABROAD ■

What students should know before moving to THE UNITED KINGDOM

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The United Kingdom (UK) has always been a popular study-abroad destination for students. That being said, moving away from the comfort of home to the UK will certainly feel daunting, at least initially. However, the move can also end up being a once in a lifetime experience. Thus, while dealing with the application process, it's also important that you prepare for the challenges that await in the UK once you move.

As mentioned earlier, the initial experience of moving to the UK can be both exciting and stressful. Sarkar Md Tanzim, a Data Science student at the University of Sussex, shares his own experience regarding this.

"I was concerned about not fitting in but thankfully, the people here in the UK are friendly, so I didn't have to struggle with that," says Tanzim. "However, I did struggle with the food here which is very bland."

Another common matter of concern for students is the weather. While everyone is aware of how cold it can get in this part of the world, some may not factor in how much it rains over there.

"I was not ready for the rain there," Tanzim adds. "Although I had an umbrella, it was of no use as it's very windy. I needed to buy a raincoat to get me through this weather."

Another concern amongst students is finding accommodation. Such was the case for Irtika Uddin, who is doing the Bar Training Course at the University of West England.

"I looked for accommodation options online for quite some time but to no avail. I then got

in touch with some Bangladeshi alumni from the university and they came through with a room to rent. For the price of £600 including bills, I managed to get a decent room," Irtika says.

Another option is signing up for university accommodation, which is usually more expensive but can also be much more convenient and less stressful according to Tanzim. It can also help you save costs on transportation.

"Since I'm living on campus, I hardly have to spend money on transportation. In general, the buses here cost £2 at most for each ride. One can get a one-day bus pass for just £4 as well," says Tanzim.

If you live outside campus, you will have to resort to buses and tubes. Kazi Sirajus Salakin, who lives in London and is doing an MSc in Management with Professional Development and Planning at BPP University, shares his firsthand account regarding this.

"The most reliable transport here is the London Tube service even though it is more expensive than buses," he says. "I usually alternate between the tube and buses for my commute. I use a travelcard which costs £157 per month and allows me to travel between London's Zone 1 to Zone 4 on tubes and anywhere in London on buses for a month."

Irtika also uses the buses for his travels. He says, "I bought a bus pass for £450 which allows me to use the buses for around nine months. This is the discounted offer for students and you have to open an account with a university email to get it."

Apart from all this, many students often

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have questions about the availability of odd jobs and the pay in the UK for students. In this regard, Tanzim says, "We mostly look for jobs using a website provided by our university. Besides that, local businesses are always in need of workers as well. The hourly minimum wage here is around £10.50, but it can go up to £14."

The situation isn't that great in London however, as Kazi says, "One may struggle to find job opportunities in London as there is a huge number of

students looking for similar working opportunities. However, the number of job openings is less. International students are allowed to work for 20 hours per week under the UK law. One can realistically earn around £800 to 850 per month, and most of it is needed for the living expenses here."

Inflation is another thing students should keep in mind. Many students have been feeling the effects of the global economic crisis after moving to the UK, including Tanzim, who says, "Inflation has impacted me a lot and continues to do so. When I started applying for master's, the Pound value was like Tk 120 to Tk 130. I estimated my entire budget based on that. However, the rate is over Tk 150 now and I have to rethink my budget again."

It's evident that studying in the UK as an international student has its challenges. However, proper planning will allow you to avoid most of the troubles you might face after you move there.

