

University of Surrey

Careers Service

<http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers>

International Students: Getting a Job

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

Please note: the rules and regulations around working in the UK are complex and change frequently. Before taking any action or making any decisions based on the information in this leaflet, we recommend that you check the details are still accurate. Good ways to do this are to look on the UK Border Agency website www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk or ask at the University's International Office.

Part-time, temporary and vacation work

If you are from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and are studying on a full-time degree programme in the UK on a valid student visa then, provided the stamp in your passport does not prohibit you from working, you can carry out casual temporary work whilst studying, for up to 20 hours per week in term time and any number of hours in vacations. Time spent writing up a dissertation or thesis **does not** count as a vacation so you are still limited to 20 hours per week during this period. You can also undertake work placements which are part of a "sandwich course" and internships, that are not longer than three months and completed within your current period of permission to be in the UK as a student. You must not fill a permanent full time vacancy, engage in business, self-employment or be a professional sports person or entertainer. For more information go to the UK Border Agency website. **Remember that your course work can take a lot of time during semesters.** It can also be useful to undertake relevant vacation work in your home country if you can. Use any contacts/networks you have. The Prospects website has information for 50+ countries: www.prospects.ac.uk/links/countries

Getting a National Insurance (NI) Number

When you start work in the UK your employer will ask for your National Insurance (NI) number. This is used to record your NI contributions, which international students working in the UK must pay to the government in the same way as UK citizens. You apply to the government to get this number. You should not apply until you have found a job but you can start work before the process of issuing the number is complete, which takes about five weeks. Phone 0845 6000643 once you have found a job. This call centre will arrange a local interview to process your application and will tell you what documents to take. The University Student Advice centre produces a useful leaflet on getting an NI number – it is available from Student Advice or the Careers Service.

Do I have to pay Income Tax?

Generally you will have to pay income tax on your earnings; the UK has an efficient tax collection system run by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), www.hmrc.gov.uk. Your employer deducts the tax you owe the government before you receive your pay. **Note: in job adverts the salary is shown before tax is deducted.**

The HMRC have a tax checker to help you calculate if you have to pay tax, see www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs/stc.htm. If you work only in the vacations and your total income from all sources (apart from student loans, scholarships and educational grants) is not more than £7,475 between 6 April 2011 and 5 April 2012, you might be able to receive your wages without tax being deducted. You and your employer have to complete form P38(S) which is available to order or download from the HMRC website. If your total income is not more than £7,475 in the tax year ending 5 April 2012 and you have paid income tax, you might be able to claim back your tax payments from the HMRC. For information about how to claim your tax back and about using form P38(S), check the HMRC web site.

As an international student am I allowed to get a permanent job in the UK?

Most international students return home on completing their studies, and if you are from outside the EEA you won't usually have the automatic right to work in the UK after your studies have finished.

For full information on all aspects of working during and after your studies, please refer to the following documents published by UKCISA:

"Working during your studies" -

http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/files/pdf/info_sheets/working_during_study_print.pdf

And "Working in the UK after your studies" -

http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/working_after_studies.php

The legislation for the terms under which international students can remain in the UK is complex and the regulations change frequently. Help is also available from:

- The University's International Student Office www.surrey.ac.uk/international
- The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, www.jcwi.org.uk
- The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), www.oisc.gov.uk, keeps a list of registered immigration advisers, if you want to hire one to help you.

Information about the most recent regulation changes can be found on the UK Border Agency's website at: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk.

Job Hunting

If you are ready to seek employment in the UK, then you should follow the same process as all other job seekers. Identify possible employers and make direct or speculative applications using a CV or application form as they require. The Careers Service has leaflets to help you. It is worth bearing in mind that employers,

particularly smaller ones, may not know all the relevant rules and regulations on employing international students or graduates. You can increase your chances of success by educating yourself about the different rules that apply to your own situation, and be prepared to answer any questions an employer may have. It may help to take along documentation with you to interview that shows any entitlement you may have to work in the UK. Another area to consider is how your qualifications from your home country relate to UK qualifications. Some larger employers will be familiar with the comparability of overseas qualifications, but others - again often smaller employers - won't be. In this case it may be useful to provide them with this information on your CV or Application Form. Information on the comparability of UK and overseas qualifications is available from UK NARIC www.naric.org.uk.

Employment in other countries

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

If you want to work in a country other than your home country, you will need to check and follow the immigration procedures carefully (approval usually takes 3 - 6 months). Check any offers of employment carefully as, for example, fixed term contracts may include a 'bond', requiring you to repay part of your earnings/hiring costs if you break the contract. Every country operates differently with regard to its recruitment timetable and main methods of graduate recruitment and you will need to check these for each country. Vacancy bulletins and employer directories, available from the Careers Service, occasionally carry job advertisements from companies overseas - sometimes professional journals do too. Some recruitment agencies specialise in overseas opportunities. **However, you should not pay money to an agency in the UK for help in finding work.** The Careers Service can inform you of any forthcoming Careers Fairs specialising in employment in specific countries or regions. Networking whilst visiting the target country or making contact with alumni associations in the country of interest can also be a good way to find out about jobs. At every stage in your job search you can discuss strategies or issues with Careers Service staff.

Timing your job hunting

In the UK, the graduate recruitment cycle begins at the start of the academic year, just under a year before actual employment starts. Employers expect you to seek out their vacancies and make direct contact with them. Many large, multinational companies set deadlines in December or January (or even earlier) to receive applications from new graduates and postgraduates. As there are different

recruitment timetables in different countries you will need to plan early. You will need to research immigration requirements as well as employment opportunities. Applying for employment as a graduate in your home country, before you leave the UK, also requires planning and organisation.

How the Careers Service can help you.

The Careers Service is in the Philip Marchant Building which we share with the Accommodation Office and the International Office. See

<http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers>

We are open throughout the year and offer a range of advice and information services to all students to help you job hunt efficiently.

These include:

- One-to-one confidential interviews with a Careers Adviser to discuss any careers related issue. Book this in advance – in person or by calling 01483 689001
- Departmental talks, in which the Careers Adviser will make you and other students on your course aware of the possible career options to students of your subject. These will be advertised in your department.
- A talk in the first semester especially for international students about UK job hunting
- An effective Careers Library and website, <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/careers>, with information on vacancies, country profiles, postgraduate study as well as on graduate level occupations. If you are unsure how to use the information sources – just ask.
- Workshops and employer presentations, in the autumn and spring semesters. For details, please visit the Careers website, see Quick links and then “What’s on” section.
- Feedback on your CV, covering letter or application form before you send these off
- One-to-one practice interviews to enable you to prepare for job interviews

And finally,

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