



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS  
**Welcome  
Guide**



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

# Welcome message

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the University of Leeds and I extend my warmest greetings.

You are joining a university that is deeply committed to global engagement, academic excellence, and meaningful societal impact.

Have a look at this video of our campus [here](#)



As **Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor** I am proud of our commitment to internationalisation, which is underpinned by the three over-arching pillars of the **University strategy** (Universal Values, Global Change): community, culture and impact. From globally collaborative research to inclusive teaching practices and strategic partnerships across continents, our international engagement is central to our mission and identity. As a member of our University community, you'll find opportunities to connect with colleagues around the world, contribute to impactful projects, and help shape the future of higher education on a global scale.

This Welcome Guide is designed to help you navigate your first weeks, begin to discover Leeds, and feel at home at the University and in the city. I encourage you to explore, engage, and bring your unique perspective to our shared endeavour. I host an annual welcome reception for international staff each autumn and look forward to the opportunity of meeting you there. Please approach our International HR team with any queries that you may have, and they will be happy to help you.

Thank you for joining us. We're so pleased to have you here!

Best wishes,

**Professor Hai-Sui Yu**

Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Leeds

# Living in Leeds

Leeds is a great place to live and work. It's a bustling city surrounded by beautiful countryside, and our campus is just a short walk from the city centre.

Our [website](#) can give you more information. Here is what some of our staff members have to say about Leeds and some of the surrounding areas:



*'Surprise view Otley Chevin - Fantastic views over Otley great place to for a walk in many directions, nice to watch the sunset and grab fish and chips from nearby Murgatroyds (Yeadon)'.*

**Helena**

*'Escape the city and take a train from Leeds to the historic market town of Knaresborough. Have a stroll along the waterside and climb up to the castle for a majestic view. On a sunny day, hire a rowing boat and take to the water!'*

**John**

*'A short train ride from Leeds is the World Heritage site of Saltaire. It has lovely pubs, parks and even a canal walk with an ice cream boat! Salts Mill is great to potter around and pick up a book, art supplies, jewellery or homewares - there's a little bit of something for everyone!'*

**Sarah**

*'Recommend sight seeing beyond Leeds itself, if you get chance to do so - e.g. For coast - try Filey - it has a lovely long stretch of beach. For countryside/hills - try the North Yorkshire Moors which are beautiful (purple with heather in August); they are under-rated and unspoilt.'*

**Karen**

*'Leeds boasts a wide range of shops that rival some of the bigger cities, all within the compact and walkable city centre, you're never far away from the biggest brands, the best boutiques, and those cool and quirky finds that markets and independents are renowned for. Some of the biggest names on the High Street reside in the very modern Trinity Shopping Centre or there's the unique atmosphere of the Grade I listed Kirkgate Market, where Michael Marks of Marks and Spencer had his market stall. Designer shoppers will find their fix in the beautiful Victoria Quarter. Leeds also proudly boasts a Harvey Nichols and a John Lewis in the new Victoria Gate.'*

**Jen**

# Living in Leeds (continued)

**Moving to the UK means adapting to a new culture, and it can take time to adjust. While it's difficult to predict the exact situations and challenges you may encounter, here are a few aspects to consider:**

As a major UK city, Leeds is ethnically and religiously diverse. You may find the culture quite different from your home country due to the unique mix of people that make up the city. Diversity is highly valued, and everyone in the UK has the right to be treated fairly, protected from discrimination by law. This protection covers aspects such as age, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. The University hosts several staff support groups that represent and support these communities. For more information, please visit the Equality and Diversity website.

Though Britain is often thought of as a cold country, the weather is generally moderate, varying significantly with the seasons. The changing seasons influence daily life, including clothing choices, activities, and even dietary preferences. Additionally, you may notice that daylight hours can be considerably shorter during certain times of the year compared to what you are accustomed to.



# Visa & Immigration Process

The University of Leeds is proud to sponsor visas for an ever-growing number of international staff. We have a dedicated International HR Team who offer guidance with visa applications for those employed by and visiting the University.

Your employing department, with assistance from the International HR Team, will provide guidance on which visa route is most appropriate. The two main visa types used by the University are [Skilled Worker visa](#) and [Global talent visa](#).



## On arrival

If you are applying for a visa for six months or more, you may receive a 90 day vignette which is used to enter the UK and you will be instructed to create a UKVI account to access your digital immigration status, called an eVisa. EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland nationals, who have a biometric passport and used the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app will not receive a vignette and instead have a digital immigration status.

From 15 July 2025 you may not get a vignette if you apply for a study or work visa. Instead, you will need to create a UKVI account and get access to your eVisa before you travel to the UK. You'll be told what to do when you apply.

You'll still get a vignette if you apply as a dependant for any other visa or as a main applicant for visas other than study or work

The UKVI account allows you to;

- View and prove your rights in the UK for an employer, landlord, education and other organisations such as government services and the National Health Service
- Check what rights you have in the UK
- Update your personal details including your contact details, travel documents and personal information
- Link your travel document(s) to your eVisa status for return travel to the UK

It is important that visa holders are aware of and comply with the conditions of their visa (e.g. travel restrictions, right to work, and recourse to public funds). It is your responsibility to keep up to date with any changes in visa regulations and reporting requirements. If in doubt, please check with your department/ International HR.

## Right to work checks

As part of normal pre-employment screening, you will be asked to establish your [right to work](#) in the UK before any work commences. This check applies to anyone starting new employment in the UK, whether or not they require a visa. The checks must be conducted on or before your first working day once you have arrived in the UK.

# Campus facilities & Sport

The University of Leeds offers extensive facilities on campus, including modern libraries, study spaces, IT services, sports centers, dining options, and 24-hour security to support students, staff, and visitors.

## Catering

There are a wide variety of catering outlets located on campus. For details visit: [GREAT FOOD at LEEDS](#) (GFAL)

You can sign up to the app for rewards towards purchases in all outlets

## Library

There are 5 libraries [on campus](#)

## IT

If you require any help with registering for your University computer account, or are having any other IT problem please contact [IT Services](#)

## Places of worship

As one of the most multicultural cities in the UK, Leeds is home to people of many faiths. For advice on how to find information about a faith; find a place of worship or prayer space on campus or in the city; or meet people who share your beliefs, you can contact the Universities Chaplaincy team who will try to help you. Leeds University Union student faith societies are another source of information and support. Information about places of worship and faith groups are on the Leeds City Council map of faith organisations. More information on faiths is on the UK interfaith network members list.

## Staff networks

Staff Peer Support Networks are organised by staff for staff, providing a space for staff to reach out to colleagues outside of the University's support services such as Staff Counselling and Safety, Wellbeing and Health. They are recognised as being crucial to the promotion of the University's wider equality and inclusion agenda and through their activities, can help to open the door to changing the culture of an institution or organisation. They also provide members of staff who identify with a protected group or who have specific interests, with a safe, welcoming and practical platform; where exchanging information, generating and sharing views and new ideas can be expressed in an informal environment. The networks also provide peer support, networking opportunities and social activities.

## Staff Counselling Service

Workplace Counselling is provided by professionally trained, accredited and experienced practitioners.

Any member of staff can contact the team directly to discuss our services, arrange an appointment for a confidential consultation, or discuss the psychological and interpersonal challenges of their role.

## Sport and facilities

The Sport & Physical Activity Service at the University is responsible for the University's sports facilities and development programmes. Our staff team comprises some 250 people committed to delivering the highest levels of service to our customers.

Getting involved does not require you to be a 'sporty' person. Thousands of our students and staff, each year, try something new, learn a new sport or take up an activity.

We provide for all levels to enable you to improve your health and wellbeing. Something for the beginner, recreational sport for fun with a little competition and more serious sport including support for the very top athletes. Think about what level you want to start at and navigate around our site to find what's right for you.

The University's own facilities and programmes delivered in partnership with Leeds University Union are designed specifically to serve your needs.

# Induction

**Every new member of staff should receive an induction.**

**This will provide you with information about:**

- Your employment contract and its terms and conditions
- How to apply for a staff card
- Car parking, season ticket loans, and transport information
- How to get a computer and email account
- University policies, including the Equality and Diversity Policy and the Dignity at Work and Study Policy
- University procedures & mandatory training.

Further information on all these topics and more is available on the [\*\*University's Intranet\*\*](#).



# Accommodation

Depending on your circumstances and whether your relocation is short or long term, you have two accommodation options: letting or buying.

Letting a property means entering into a contract with a landlord or company to temporarily occupy the property in exchange for rent. This option is suitable if your stay is temporary, you're saving to buy a property, or need temporary accommodation while searching for a property to buy.



As a tenant, you are bound by restrictions and obligations detailed in a tenancy agreement, a legal document that protects both you and the landlord. It outlines conditions such as whether you can make alterations to the property and the notice period required to end the tenancy. Typically, a deposit equivalent to one month's or six weeks' rent is required.

Buying a property means purchasing the deeds and becoming the owner. Due to the significant expense, most people in the UK opt for a mortgage through a bank rather than buying outright. There are many mortgage options available, and if you are considering this route, it is advisable.

## Housing options in Leeds and the surrounding area

You can rent a house, flat or bedsit / studio apartment depending on how much space you and your family will need. For those without families, shared accommodation (renting with other people) can be a good temporary arrangement as it is one of the most cost-effective ways to rent. If you are new to the UK, this explanation of the [different types of properties](#) (e.g. semi-detached houses, flat, etc) might be useful.

## University accommodation

The University's Accommodation Office may be able to help you find temporary accommodation. The University of Leeds has a

selection of property that is available to rent on a temporary basis\* which might just suit your needs. This includes one or two bedroom self-contained flats.

If you are interested in renting staff accommodation, please fill out the [online application form](#). Please be aware that due to the limited number of properties, it is not always possible to find a suitable vacancy and we are unable to guarantee that you will be allocated a property.

\*NB - the minimum contract length is three weeks and the maximum stay is 3 months

As an alternative, you can access an independent booking site such as 'university rooms'. This gives you the option to book university accommodation, such as Storm Jamieson Court, on the University of Leeds campus, direct.

## Renting a property

The following property search engines list a range of properties available for rent through estate agents (realtors), and can be useful when beginning your search to get an idea of the local property market and typical rental prices:

- [Rightmove](#)
- [Zoopla](#)

# Accommodation (continued)

**There are many letting agents in Leeds and we would always advise that you let through an ARLA approved or other accredited scheme letting agent. The University doesn't provide advice about specific letting agents, but two local agents with recent positive feedback are: Castlehill Estate Agents and Hardisty and Co.**

Many people make their own arrangements for private rentals by using the following online property listing pages, although you should be careful to avoid [scam landlords](#).

- [Gumtree](#)
- [SpareRoom](#) (house share)

## Choosing the right area for you

The area you choose to live in will depend on your personal preferences and circumstances. You may wish to consider the following:

- Commuting time (how long it will take you to reach your place of work)
- [Public transport](#) links
- Car parking facilities
- Proximity to [hospitals](#) and any other services that are important to you

This [map showing the different districts of Leeds](#) will help you to judge distances from the city centre. Areas close to central Leeds will normally be more expensive. Further information is available on the ['Residents' section of the Leeds City Council website](#).

If you have school-age children, the choice of the area you wish to live in may also be influenced by the 'catchment areas' of the local [state schools](#). The catchment area is the area from which children are entitled to attend a certain local

school. Children are normally only able to get a place at a school within its catchment area.

Your colleagues may be able to offer useful information and advice on the various districts in Leeds and the surrounding area, and other matters such as schools, childcare, cost of living, public transport, commuting times, shops and other facilities.

There are other websites that provide similar information, for example [UK Local Area](#).

The University is located in LS2 and along with LS1 these postcodes are considered to be City Centre area. These areas have a high density of students (along with Headingley LS6) live in these areas. If you would like something less student orientated and more family based than areas such as Meanwood (LS6/7), Chapel Allerton (LS7), West Park or Adel (LS16), Kirkstall (LS5) or Horsforth (LS18). These areas vary from 2-5 miles to campus. If you would like two bedrooms you will expect to pay £700 - £800 per calendar month (prices correct 2025).

Allow one to two weeks before starting work to search for and view rented properties. Buying a property typically takes two to three months, but the timeline can vary. If considering purchasing, renting a place while searching is advisable.

## Furnishings and fittings

Rented accommodation may be furnished, part-furnished, or unfurnished. 'Unfurnished' typically means no furniture is provided, though carpets, curtains, and light fittings are standard. Furnished and part-furnished definitions vary, so it is important to confirm what is included with your landlord before signing a contract.

## Rent

Rent prices vary based on property location, type, size, and quality. Typically paid monthly via direct debit or standing order, rent usually excludes utility bills, which are your responsibility.

## Rental Deposit

It is standard practice in the UK to pay a deposit to the landlord in advance of moving into your rented accommodation. This is normally equivalent to one- or two-months' rent, but the exact amount may vary. Make sure you get a receipt for any deposit or fees you pay.

The landlord should refund the deposit in full when you move out, unless there has been damage to the property or its contents during your tenancy. Your landlord must not make deductions from the deposit for fair 'wear and tear', i.e., the normal deterioration of fixtures, fittings and items which occurs through normal use during your tenancy.

# Accommodation (continued)

It is advisable to keep a written record of all the rental payments that you make. If you have problems with your landlord, you can get advice from the [Citizens Advice Bureau](#), which has rental specific guidance [here](#).

Your landlord is legally required to put your deposit into one of the government-backed [Tenancy Deposit Schemes](#). This ensures that your deposit will be protected if your landlord refuses to refund it without good reason or makes unreasonable deductions. Every scheme provides a free dispute resolution service. If you disagree with your landlord about how much of the deposit should be returned, the dispute resolution service will resolve the matter and refund the appropriate amount of your deposit.

## Tips for tenants

- Familiarise yourself with [tenants' rights](#) in the UK
- Make sure your landlord is registered with a government-backed [Tenancy Deposit Protection](#) scheme and that your deposit is paid into one of the available schemes. Your deposit will be returned at the end of the tenancy, minus any deductions for breakages or damage (see the tips below to avoid disputes about the state of the property and its contents)
- Sign your tenancy agreement before you move into the property



- Confirm that you understand and agree fully with the terms before signing the tenancy agreement (do not sign the tenancy agreement if you do not fully agree with its terms or if you do not fully understand it - ask for it to be clarified or changed)
- Check the inventory for the property thoroughly before moving in. If your landlord does not provide an inventory, it is advisable that you make one yourself and send a copy to the landlord
- Check, note and photograph any existing damage to the furniture and/or property

Guidance for tenants in private housing can be found on the [Leeds City Council](#) website or from [Citizens Advice](#), whose local branch will be happy to assist you in person or on the phone.

## Council Tax

Council Tax is collected by local authorities and used to pay for local services such as street lighting, road maintenance, rubbish collection and some education and social services.

The amount of Council Tax you are liable to pay will depend on the type of property in which you live and on the area. Most individuals will have to pay Council Tax on the property in which they live, although some individuals, such as full-time students, may qualify for a discount or be exempted from paying altogether. Council Tax must be paid directly to the Council.

# Accommodation (continued)

You can check which Council Tax [band](#) your property is in and the local authority that will collect it.

For further information, including the cost of Council Tax and exemption rules, please visit: [Leeds City Council – Council Tax](#)

## Utility bills (gas, electricity, water)

In the UK, the tenant is normally liable for utility bill payments though some landlords may choose to include some of these charges in the rent. The costs for gas, electricity and water may differ between providers.

Arranging utility services: you can use price comparison websites to help you decide on a provider, however, you may be restricted in the choice of providers available in your area. Some of the popular price comparison websites include [Uswitch](#), [Gocompare.com](#) and [MoneySuperMarket](#).

Check with your landlord whether the property is currently being supplied with electricity, gas and water. If not, you should make supply agreements with the providers before moving into the property.

Paying for utility services: when you move into your property, you should make a note of the gas, electricity and water meter readings to ensure you are billed correctly. The independent consumer advice group, 'Which,' offer guidelines on how to get the [cheapest utility tariffs](#).

You will usually receive a bill every three months, although you can also pay for your bills by monthly direct debit, straight from your bank account. Make sure you take a reading regularly (monthly) and alert your providers when you move out to ensure you do not overpay.

In the UK, you will often be required to show a recent utility bill as proof of residence. If you buy or rent a property together with a partner it is advisable, where possible, to sign up to providers under both of your names as this will help you to establish a UK credit history.

## Telephone and internet

There may be an existing telephone line in your property. To activate an existing telephone line or to arrange for one to be installed, you will need to contact a telephone provider, such as [BT](#), [Virgin Media](#) or [TalkTalk](#).

There are many different providers of telephone and internet services. You can find quotes on websites such as [broadbandchoices](#), [Gocompare.com](#), [comparethemarket](#), and [MoneySuperMarket](#).

## Television licence

You will need a licence to watch television in the UK, including viewing live television on devices such as your computer, mobile phone, games console and digital box. Information on how to pay and the fee is available on the [TV licensing website](#).

## Insurance

Insurance is highly recommended to protect you against the loss of personal property (contents insurance) and damage within your home or flat, particularly if insurance from your home country does not cover you whilst abroad.

You may wish to protect your possessions against damage or theft. Go to the [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) website for details.

Comparison websites, such as [MoneySuperMarket](#), [Gocompare.com](#) or [comparethemarket.com](#), will give you competitive rates from a variety of insurers. Your bank may also offer special deals on insurance cover.

## Rubbish and recycling

Local councils handle rubbish and recycling collection. Details specific to your area can be found on your local council's website.

# Healthcare

The National Health Service (NHS) provides the major part of healthcare in England, including primary care, in-patient care, long-term healthcare, ophthalmology and dentistry. The NHS uses General Practitioners (GPs) to provide primary healthcare and to make referrals to further services as necessary. Hospitals then provide more specialist services, including care for patients with psychiatric illnesses, as well as direct access to Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments. Pharmacists are able to prescribe medication. Community pharmacies are privately owned but have contracts with the national health service to supply prescription drugs.



## Dental

You are encouraged to register with an NHS dentist. Always check if the dentist offers NHS treatment (there is a scale of small, fixed charges) as some dentists do not offer this. Free treatment is available from the Leeds Dental Institute (part of the University), see [here](#) for how to access this. The dental institute is open Monday to Friday.

If you have an out of hours dental emergency, please see here: [Emergency dentists in Leeds - Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust](#)

## Opticians

Anyone who needs optical treatment can make an appointment with any optician of their choice. There is a minimum charge for eye tests. If you are on a low income, you may be able to receive help toward the cost of optical treatment. You should collect an HC11 form from a pharmacy. The University of Leeds can offer access to free eye tests and work related glasses. See [here](#) for how this works.

## Pharmacies

There are many pharmacies/chemists in the area, some of which are open late and can provide expert help by trained professionals on a wide range of health issues. For further information, see: [Pharmacies near Leeds - NHS](#)

## Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any University buildings; it is illegal to smoke in any enclosed public space.

## Additional University Help

The University offers a comprehensive package of additional [benefits](#), [simply health](#) can help with covering the NHS costs of dental care and opticians. We also operate a free [occupational health service](#).

Please note that this is not a GP practice, and staff are strongly advised to register with a doctor for primary healthcare needs.

## Additional Financial Support for low-income households

If you are on a low income, you may be eligible for help toward the cost of prescriptions, dental treatment, and optical services. You can apply [online](#) where eligibility criteria are outlined.

If you become ill and have not yet registered with a GP, it is important to seek medical assistance promptly through a local healthcare provider or by contacting NHS services for guidance: [Get help for your symptoms - NHS 111](#)

# Travel

Leeds offers a wide range of convenient travel options including train, coach, car, air, bus, cycling, and Park & Ride services, making it easy to reach and explore the city and surrounding areas.

## Buses

Several bus companies operate services within the area and its surroundings. There are enquiry offices at most terminals where you can request timetables and learn about journey costs. The main local bus company is [Metro](#), but there are other providers like [First Bus](#) and [Arriva](#). Different companies charge varying fares and offer a variety of passes. Passes and saver tickets can help reduce travel costs; for more information, visit the respective company websites. The university can help towards the cost of your travel. Please check here for further information: [Travel Benefits](#).

Bus companies require that children aged 11 to 16 carry a pass in order to get their concessionary fare. Further details on these and other passes are available from bus and rail stations and online:

Travel on some school bus routes are subsidised but most are not free. You should ask the school for more details.

## Trains

The UK has an extensive rail network, making it easy to travel between cities and towns. Leeds is a major hub with frequent services to London, Manchester, and beyond.

You can buy tickets online, at stations, or via mobile apps. Booking in advance often saves money, and railcards can offer

discounts. Trainline.com offers tickets from many different operators, often at discounted prices. Trains are usually cheaper and less crowded outside rush hours, so consider travelling at off-peak times.

Located in the city centre, around a 20-minute walk from campus, Leeds Station is one of the busiest in the country, offering connections across the UK, with lines run by a variety of providers such as [LNER](#), [Northern](#), and [Trans Pennine Express](#).

## Airport connections

Leeds Bradford Airport is accessible via frequent bus services from the station.

## Taxis

Although taxi travel in the area is not as costly as in London, it can still be expensive. Before taking a taxi, ask the driver for an estimated fare to ensure you have sufficient funds. You can hail a 'black and white cab' on the street, but a 'private hire cab' must be booked in advance for insurance purposes. Private hire cabs are often more affordable. Uber and Veezu are also private hire options.



# Travel (continued)



## Driving in the UK

The UK has strict laws about driving. You should check that you meet all the legal requirements before driving any vehicle. You should also familiarise yourself with the correct procedures that are likely to be different from your home country. Please note that it is illegal not to wear a seatbelt in a vehicle where one is available. You must have a licence that allows you to drive in the UK. Whether you have this or not will depend on where your licence was issued. This will also determine how long you are permitted to drive in the UK for.

You will either be able to drive in the UK using your current licence or will have to apply to convert your current licence to a UK licence. If you bring a car from outside the UK into the UK for more than six months, you will need to register and tax the vehicle. This can be costly and you may wish to consider alternatives such as buying a second-hand car or using public transport. Running a car in the UK can also be expensive; petrol, insurance, licensing and tax are all expensive, as are the costs of any repairs. If you do decide to own a car in the UK, you will need to make sure the vehicle has an up-to-date MOT, and is taxed and insured. It is illegal to drive your vehicle without these.

Please make sure you visit the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority's (DVLA) website: [Driver and Vehicle Licensing](#)

[Agency - GOV.UK](#) and the British Government's website for detailed information on driving and owning a car in the UK: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## Road Safety

The driver of a car and all the passengers must wear seat belts. There are strict laws against drinking alcohol and driving. It is also illegal for drivers to use mobile phones or any other electronic devices while in the driver's seat with the engine running. Traffic in the UK travels on the left-hand side of the road. Remember this if you are driving and also when you are crossing the road. You should always check the traffic flow from the right. Further information about road safety, relevant for pedestrians and the drivers of all vehicles, can be found in the booklet 'The Highway Code', which you can buy in bookshops and is available on the government's website:

[The Highway Code - Guidance - GOV.UK](#) There is a version available for children known as the Green Cross Code.

## Cyclescheme

The University is signed up to [Cyclescheme](#). With this scheme you may be able to get a bike tax-free:

# Living Costs

Leeds is a moderately expensive city in the UK, with an average monthly cost of living including rent around £1675, Renting a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre costs around £965 per month, while a cheaper option outside the centre goes for about £710. \*correct at July 2025.

It is difficult to estimate how much you will need to cover basic living expenses as these will differ based on your individual circumstances. Goods such as alcohol, tobacco and petrol/diesel are subject to high tax rates and are likely to be more expensive than your home country.

Private rented accommodation costs are likely to be your main expense and will vary considerably based on the area you live in and the type, size and standard of your accommodation.

Other key factors in living costs are:

- Food
- Utility bills (electricity, gas, water, council tax, TV licence)
- Travel fares
- Motoring costs
- Clothing and footwear
- Leisure activities (going to the cinema, eating out etc)
- Childcare
- Toiletries
- Broadband connection.

If you're budgeting, then the [Office for National Statistics shopping prices comparison tool](#) will give you an idea how much everyday items cost in the UK.

The entitlement of your spouse to undertake employment will be dependent upon your conditions of entry.



# Taxes & Pensions

The UK tax system funds public services like healthcare, education, and welfare. It features direct taxes on income, profits, and gains (such as income tax, capital gains tax, corporation tax) and indirect taxes on goods and services (like Value Added Tax, VAT). Pension schemes provide income in retirement. National Insurance is a key part of the UK's welfare system and operates as a tax on earnings and self-employed profits. It ensures individuals qualify for certain state benefits. Contributions are collected mainly through payroll (PAYE) for employees.

## National Insurance number

In order to work in the UK you need a National Insurance number. If you do not already have one, you must apply here [Apply for a National Insurance number: Who can apply for a National Insurance number - GOV.UK](#). Your National Insurance number is unique to you and will never change; it is your reference number in the social security system. We will give you a 'P46 employee without a P45' form to fill in when you arrive so we can automatically deduct taxes from your earnings; you need a National Insurance number to complete this form. At the end of the financial year you will receive a P60 end of year certificate showing your total pay, tax and National Insurance contributions for the year.

## Income Tax

Income Tax is paid on earnings, pensions and benefits. It is only paid on income over your tax-free allowance; almost every UK resident can receive a certain amount of income per year that they do not pay tax on. This amount changes yearly. Any income you receive above this amount is taxable and the rate of tax you pay varies depending on your income. Up-to-date information on income tax rates is available online:

[Income Tax: introduction: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

As an employee of The University of your income tax will be automatically deducted from your pay using the Pay As You Earn system (PAYE) that all UK employers use. This is calculated by the tax code you are given. Your tax code is visible on your pay slip. If you think you are paying too much or too little tax, you need to contact Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) immediately as you may have been given the wrong tax code. They will be able to advise you and change your tax code if necessary. The [payroll team](#) can give information on how your salary is paid.

When you purchase goods or services, one or more taxes are included in the price you pay.

Valued added tax (VAT) is paid everywhere in the European Union (EU) and is normally included in the price you see. The standard rate of VAT, like any tax, can change; it is currently 20%. There are certain items that you pay a reduced rate of VAT on; these include children's car seats, gas and electricity for your home. The reduced rate of VAT is 5%. You do not pay any VAT on basic food items, books, newspapers and magazines, children's clothes, and items provided in special circumstances, for example, equipment for disabled people.

Fuel duty is paid on petrol, diesel and LPG gas. Excise duty is paid on alcohol and tobacco. This is included in the price you see.

## Tax returns

As a foreign national working in the UK, you may have to fill in a self-assessment tax return. This is a form that looks at all your income and decides whether you are paying the right amount of income tax. A tax return is filled in after the financial year has ended (the financial year begins on 5 April), so for example a tax return for the tax year 2024/25 is filled in after April 6 2025. There are strict deadlines for tax returns and if you miss them, you can be fined. The HMRC website has details of all the important dates and has guidance on how to fill in the form: [www.gov.uk/self-assessment-tax-returns](#)

You will pay National Insurance contributions if you earn above a certain amount and are under the state pension age. This is a compulsory tax and it is automatically deducted from your wages. [National Insurance rates and categories: Contribution rates - GOV.UK](#)

## Pensions

The University of has a number of [pension schemes](#) available to its employees. You will be automatically enrolled on the appropriate scheme relevant to your position. Should you have any questions, you can contact the University's dedicated [Pensions Office](#).

A proportion of your wages will automatically be paid into the scheme by the University.

# Banks & Banking

**It is important to have access to money for your first few weeks in the UK, either as cash or through your home country credit and debit cards.**

**You will need to open a UK bank account to allow you to manage your money and pay for goods and services. You can service your account by visiting a branch, or more commonly via the internet or your telephone/mobile.**

UK law requires banks to carry out identity verification and background checks on new customers opening bank accounts. As a result, it can take up to two weeks before a new bank account can be opened. It is likely that your bank will ask you to provide the following documents:

- photographic identification (passport/national ID card and visa/biometric residence permit if applicable)
- evidence of UK address (tenancy agreement, or most recent council tax bill or utility bill showing your name and address)
- a letter from the University confirming your status (e.g. employee, academic visitor)

The Money Advisory Service has further guidance on [acceptable forms of identification](#).

Your monthly salary from the University of Leeds will be transferred into a UK current account. A current account is a private bank account for all everyday banking services that individuals need. To open a current account, make an appointment with your preferred bank as soon as you arrive, and check which documents you will need to take with you.

If you are arriving with a partner, you may wish to consider opening a joint account in both your names. This will allow your partner to more easily obtain their own debit and credit cards in future as well as begin to establish their own credit

history in the UK. Banks will generally require you and your partner to show proof of address, which can be both of your names on a council tax bill.

## Managing your account

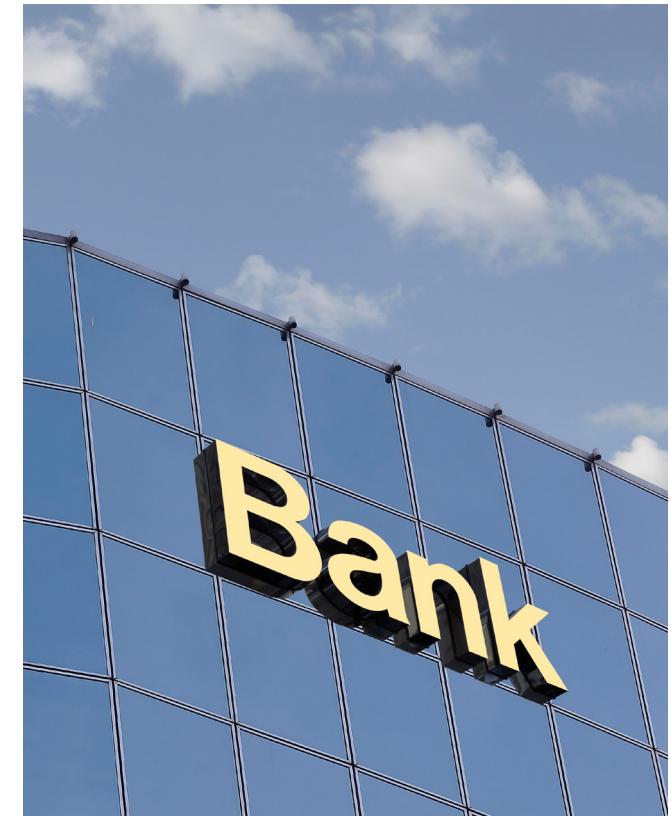
There are many different types of account available in the UK. It is also possible to have more than one account and they need not be at the same bank or building society. Please note that some banks and building societies will charge to transfer money into accounts not managed by them. The advisors in the banks and building societies will be able to advise you on the types of account which best suit your requirements.

## Standing Orders and Direct Debit

These facilities allow you to set up an automatic payment and are commonly used to pay for rent and bills. In most instances, you can choose the frequency and the date that the money will be withdrawn from your account (many people opt for them to be paid on or around their pay day).

## Current Accounts

Current accounts differ from bank to bank. You may only be able to open a basic account at first (you may only have a cash card instead of a debit card) but then be able to upgrade at a later date. The bank or building society will tell you what is available to you.



# Banks & Banking (continued)



## Savings Accounts

A savings account is designed to help you save money. Many people in the UK have a savings account as well as a current or basic account to help them save by making the money harder to access. Some savings accounts will only issue you with a cash card or state that you have to withdraw money in a branch office to discourage you from spending your savings. The rates and types of savings accounts vary widely and you should get more information about your options before committing.

## Credit Cards

Most banks can offer credit cards eg Visa and Mastercard. These are separate from your main account and do not need to be with the same bank or building society. You can use a credit card to pay in the place of cash in shops and online. You can withdraw cash or get 'cashback' but most cards will charge you for this facility. You will receive a monthly bill for items registered against your card. This can be paid off monthly or you can pay a minimum amount each month. These cards charge interest against any outstanding amounts not cleared each month and if there are items registered against the card you have to pay a minimum amount each month.

## Statements

These are sent to your home or email address, usually once a month, and will show all transactions since your last statement. They will also show the current balance of your account. If you have any queries about the details shown on your statement you should raise these with your bank or building society as soon as possible.

## Interest

Interest may be paid to you if your account is in credit (although not all accounts offer interest). This money is taxable and the bank will deduct the appropriate tax before placing the balance of interest in your account. Interest is paid by you if the account is overdrawn (if you have removed more money from your account than you have deposited). Some accounts have an agreed overdraft limit. If you go over an agreed overdraft limit the bank or building society will normally charge you a fee at a high rate to discourage the practice. In these circumstances the bank may refuse to pay your cheques or direct debits causing them to 'bounce' (be refused), for which you will incur an additional fee. These charges can be costly and banks and building societies will have leaflets and information explaining the charges they make. Both types of interest vary according to circumstances.

# Banks & Banking (continued)

## How to open an account

Once you have decided which bank or building society best meets your requirements, you will need to open an account. You can do this by visiting the relevant branch office during its opening hours. You will need to take with you:

- a sum of money to deposit
- your passport
- a copy of your employment contract or other proof of income
- your tenancy agreement if applicable (you should take your residence permit along with you also).

This documentation is required because the bank or building society will usually want to confirm your identity and address. Once at the bank you will need to fill in an application form to pay a deposit into the account. Any cards and cheque books will be sent to you through the post. The bank or building society will provide you with more information about these aspects of your account and its management.

You can use a website such as Money Saving Expert to compare different types of bank account from different banks:  
[www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com)

## The University of Leeds and HSBC UK partnership

**Tracy Johnson** at HSBC UK is our dedicated account manager and University of Leeds partner, to support your personal banking needs.

Depending on the countries you are travelling between, HSBC may be able to help you open a bank account in your home and/or destination country, sometimes before you set off (additional eligibility criteria and T&Cs apply). This may also help you when making payments and transfers between countries. Further information can be found on [HSBC's website](#). For account opening, please contact [Tracy](#) directly, by email.

**The University of Leeds doesn't provide advice about who you should bank with.**



# Children

If you are considering bringing a child, or children, please read the following notes carefully.



## Pregnancy and Infants

The NHS has a comprehensive range of services available to help you through pregnancy, childbirth and with infant children. As soon as you find out you are expecting a baby you need to get in touch with your GP who will be able to inform you of the antenatal services available in your area. These services include appointing you a midwife to help you through pregnancy, the birth and infant health checks, and antenatal classes to help you prepare for the birth and how to look after and feed your baby. In some areas these classes are available for women whose first language is not English. There are also a number of tests available including blood tests and ultrasound scans. Your GP and midwife will be able to advise you on all the services available to you.

Around ten days after the birth you will see a health visitor. These are specialist nurses whose role is to help families, especially those with babies and young children. Your health visitor will be able to answer all your baby-related questions and inform you of NHS support groups available. As with all NHS services, these services are free to you, your partner and your children. The NHS website outlines the services available:

[Pregnancy - NHS](#)

Another resource you may find helpful, both during pregnancy and afterwards, is the [National Childcare Trust](#) (NCT); a charity dedicated to providing impartial information to parents. They also offer a range of courses and support networks, not all of which are free.

## Choosing a state or private school

You have three options available for how and where to educate your children:

### State schools

These are run by public authorities, and you do not pay fees (the money comes from taxes). State schools must follow rules from the government's Department for Education, for example on the timings of the school year, and the subjects and exams offered.

Most children in the UK attend state schools. These are traditionally run by the Local Education Authority. In Leeds, this is Leeds City Council. Their webpage on [Starting School](#) provides detailed guidance. Attendance in state schools is free, but you must apply for a place for your child.

State schools in the UK are either 'comprehensive', i.e. they do not select pupils on academic ability or academically selective, which are known as 'grammar schools'.

# Children (continued)

State schools can also be:

- a faith school associated with a particular religion
- a special school for pupils with **special educational needs** (SEN), which may include physical disabilities, learning difficulties, or behavioural difficulties
- an academy or free school which receives funding directly from central government, and may set their own term dates, times and curriculum

Some schools have specific admission requirements, for example a faith school may require evidence of religious affiliation.

[www.leeds.gov.uk/schools-and-education/composite-prospectus](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/schools-and-education/composite-prospectus)

## Home schooling

This is a less common option but can offer greater flexibility. For more information on home schooling, including the legal requirements, please see:

• [UK Government guidance on home education](http://UK Government guidance on home education)



## Private (independent) schools

Private schools (also called independent schools) charge fees. They do not necessarily follow the same curriculum, school phases and timings as state schools. For example, some have lessons on Saturdays, or expect pupils to stay at school in the evenings for supervised homework.

Some independent schools are *boarding schools*, where pupils live at the school during term time. For younger pupils, there may be a range of partial and weekly boarding options.

Private junior schools may be called *preparatory schools* (often shortened to prep schools), because they prepare pupils for entrance to senior school. Some private senior schools have their own associated prep and pre-prep (nursery/infant) schools.

Most private schools operate waiting lists for entry into each year group. Places for the most usual entry years may be offered a year or more in advance of the start date. Pupils may be required to attend a selection interview and/or sit an entrance exam.

Private schools have their own websites that provide information on admissions, fees, scholarships and bursaries. Many private schools are members of the **Independent Schools Council** (ISC) organisation: [Search for a private school in your area](http://Search for a private school in your area)

# Children (continued)



## UK education system

Children start formal schooling in the reception year, then progress from Year 1 through to Year 13. The years are grouped into 'Key Stages'.

In most schools, children move from primary school to secondary school at the beginning of Key Stage 3. Compulsory education begins just before the child's fifth birthday.

Children are placed in year groups according to age, not the level of knowledge, skills or achievement. They move up to the next year group after the summer break, whether or not they have reached the expected level of attainment. Children with special needs or who have fallen behind may receive extra support.

Many schools employ specialist staff to help children whose first language is not English. You will need to check with the headteacher of the school you are considering for your child to find out what language assistance is available. School hours are normally from 9am to 3.30pm, however some schools may start earlier and/ or end later. In addition, many schools run after-school activities and/or clubs in which your child may be eligible to participate. Please check these details with the school. If you require further assistance in finding a school for your child, you should contact [School admissions | Leeds.gov.uk](http://School admissions | Leeds.gov.uk)

## National Curriculum

State schools usually follow the National Curriculum which prescribes the subjects that are taught. It sets out the expected 'levels of attainment' for pupils at the end of every school year. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils take tests in reading, writing and mathematics. They are tested in the same subjects in Key Stage 2, plus spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG).

At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils sit public examinations for each of the subjects studied, usually General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). GCSEs are graded from 1-9, replacing the previous system of grades A\* - G.

Pupils may then study for up to two further years in Key Stage 5 (often known as Sixth Form) for A Levels (General Certificate of Education Advanced Level). Most schools or colleges will set general and subject-specific requirements for Sixth Form entry.

Alternative post-16 choices include vocational qualifications and apprenticeships. You can study for a vocational qualification (such as hairdressing, catering, or leisure and tourism) at a college, or for an apprenticeship programme (such as accountancy, business administration, or engineering) through an employer.

# Children (continued)

## Pre-school Childcare

**Nurseries** (0 – 4 years) provide childcare throughout the year, and are open during working hours, which can be any time from 7:30am until 6:00pm.

It is advisable to apply for a nursery place as early as possible; in many cases parents do so before the child is born - you can apply once you know your 'due date'. A deposit may be payable on application. You may wish to apply for places at a few different nurseries as there is often a waiting list for places at popular nurseries. The availability of places may depend on your child's age and on your working patterns. If you plan to return to work part-time, it is worth talking to your preferred nursery to find out what options they offer.

Nursery costs in the UK are relatively high compared to other countries. **The Family Information Service Leeds** can help you find information and support with your childcare needs and provides information about childminders, nurseries, playgroups and out-of-school play schemes. Some funding may be available for children who are aged three or over. Ask your childcare provider or The Family Information Service Leeds for more information.

**Childminders** care for your child in their own home. Most are self-employed and can often offer more flexible hours than a nursery, **they will care for several children at a time**. A childminder might be a good option if you prefer your child to be cared for in a less formal environment.

Childminders must be registered and inspected by **Ofsted** (check their registration number and most recent inspection report). There are rules limiting the number and age of children they can care for **at one time**. It is a good idea to visit several childminders before you make your final choice, and you might like to consider whether the childminder offers pick-ups for your local pre-school or nursery.

**Pre-schools** or **playgroups** provide play, childcare and early years educational sessions for children aged two to four years. They tend to be based on school sites or in Community Centres, and most are only open during term-time. Most pre-schools offer morning or afternoon sessions only. Fees will vary.

Crèches provide temporary childcare for a limited number of hours while you do something else. Crèches are often found in leisure centres (gyms) and shopping centres. Some are linked to adult learning or **children's centres**. The opening times, fees and age range will vary according to the provider.

## On-campus childcare

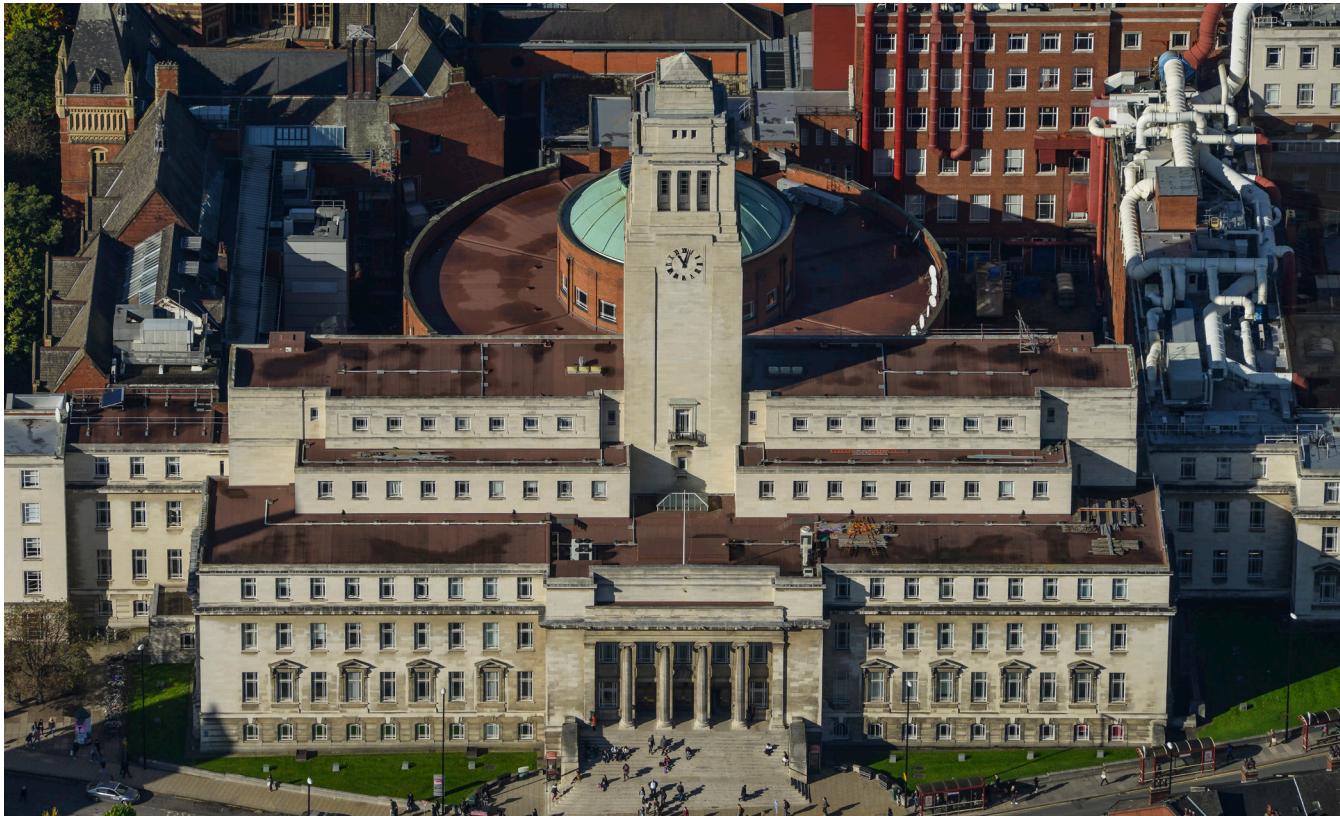
On-campus childcare is provided by the University nursery, **Bright Beginnings**.

## OFSTED

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Child Services and Skills) is an independent regulator for the British government. It inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people, and those providing education and skills for learners of all ages. They produce a report on all facilities that they inspect and these are available on their website:

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

# Important information & Contact numbers



## Guidance for emergency situations

### Campus map

If you need an urgent response out of hours (outside of 9am – 5pm) and weekends:

**Security Service** (non-emergencies):

**+44(0)113 343 5494** or **+44(0)113 343 5495**

Security Service (emergencies only):

**+44(0)113 343 2222**

or contact Security via the [\*\*SafeZone app\*\*](#).

[\*\*Contact us\*\*](#) by email with any other queries





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