

Going home

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In the months before your course finishes, as well as being busy with your examinations, thesis or dissertation, you will also be thinking about what to do next. Like many students, you might be looking forward to going back to your home country, to your family, friends and colleagues, and to the culture that you know best. Alternatively, you might be planning to do another course of study or to stay in the UK for work. These are the big questions, but there are also many practical issues to think about. With all of this, it is important to understand that this is a difficult and stressful time for you. This section helps you through this difficult period; and to prepare you for returning to your home culture.

If you are leaving the UK and returning to your home country, you should start making the arrangements as early as possible. Remember that in your last months in the UK examinations or finishing other work will take up a large part of your time, so planning for your departure should begin early.

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Travel and shipping home

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Travel

To get the cheapest tickets, you have to book early. Look on the websites of either travel companies or the airlines themselves. Shop around and compare for the best price.

Shipping

If you have been in the UK for a long time, you probably have more things now than you could carry on a plane or other form of transport. Check with the travel agent or airline about weight or size limits for luggage. Paying for excess luggage on the plane can be very expensive. Sending it by ship or by rail is often cheaper, but be careful to choose a company which has a good reputation and is reliable. Ask friends or your student adviser for suggestions; or consult the [British Association of Removers](#). Check if the price includes insurance to cover any loss or breakages. If you have items you do not need or do not want to take home, such as furniture, textbooks, or equipment, you could sell these to other students, or online; or give them to a local charity shop.

Refunds and Deposits

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Housing deposit

If you have paid a deposit for your accommodation, see our information about [housing deposits](#) and speak to your landlord about how to arrange for return of the deposit.

Income Tax refund

If you have been working in the UK and paying income tax, you may be entitled to have some of that tax refunded to you. Contact His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for details on how to claim an [income tax or national insurance refund](#).

TV Licence refund

If you have paid your TV license in advance, and there is at least one month remaining when you leave the UK, you can apply for a refund of the unused portion. For details, see the [TV licensing website](#).

Other utilities

If you have paid in advance for gas, electricity, water, broadband or other services, contact the provider to check whether refunds are available.

Who needs to know?

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You will need to tell various people and offices that you intend to leave the UK. It may be useful to give some people your forwarding address.

- At your institution, notify your academic department, housing office, Registry, alumni office.
- Give utility companies and other services plenty of notice of when you will be leaving, so they can calculate any final bill and refund any overpayment or deposit: electricity, gas, water, broadband, landline, Council Tax billing office (if you pay Council Tax), rental firms (if you rent any equipment), subscriptions.
- Others you may need to notify include your doctor, dentist, your child's school.
- It is best to contact organisations at least a month before you leave to find out about deadlines and what you need to do.
- Think about all the direct debits and standing orders that go out of your bank account, and decide when to stop them.
- Check if there is a specific period of notice for your accommodation and find out how you can get your deposit back before you leave, or you will be charged rent even after you have left.
- Pay all bills and overdrafts before you leave the UK. Remember that UK banks have agreements with banks in many other countries, which could enable them to collect debts from your home bank. Also, your institution may refuse to give you your degree or other academic qualification until you pay any money you still owe for your tuition fees, accommodation, or library fines.

Forwarding address

You can arrange for the [Royal Mail Redirection Service](#) to forward your UK mail to your address in your home country. There is a fee for this. You may also wish to give your home address to a number of people, so that they can keep in contact with you and forward any correspondence or important information.

Career plans

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Keeping in touch with referees

To help you in your professional life back in your home country, it can be very helpful to have references from the UK. At least a month before you leave, contact a few people who can comment on your abilities and your work (such as an academic supervisor or employer) and ask them for a written reference.

Access to careers information & advice

You might also want to buy or subscribe to specialist publications that you cannot find at home, or to join a professional organisation to help you keep your knowledge up-to-date.

Your institution's Careers Service may be able to help you research potential employers in your home country (or elsewhere) and to subscribe to systems which will notify you of job vacancies. You can also find information on resources such as the [Prospects](#) graduate careers website.

Reverse culture shock

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Many students are surprised to find that they also need a period of adjustment when they return to their home country. Find out more about [reverse culture shock and tips to help you deal with it](#).

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