

Student work

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Working in the UK as a student can be a rewarding experience. It's important to understand and comply with your immigration rights and restrictions and any limits to working that your institution might have.

Most students aged 16 or over can work, even if it is only a course-related work placement. It is a great opportunity to make some extra money, meet new people, enhance your career prospects and experience working life in the UK.

Work rights are a condition of your immigration permission, so it's very important that you are clear about what you may and may not do. You must always follow any restrictions and ensure that your work does not affect the progress on your course.

If you've already been granted permission, check your work restrictions on your biometric residence permit (BRP) and find out more about working hours.

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Can I work in the UK?

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Many, but not all, Students and Child students can work. This depends on the type of Student sponsor you have. You can find what type of Student sponsor you have and their sponsor status in the 'sponsor type' and 'status' columns in the [register of Student sponsors](#).

When you have found your college or university, find out if you can work and what your maximum working hours are, based on the Student sponsor's type including:

- Student sponsor with a track record.
- Overseas higher education institution.
- Independent school.
- Any other student sponsor.

Always check the information on your immigration document. If it says, "No work", you must not work. If you think this is a mistake, you must get it corrected before you take any employment. . You can find further details in these Home Office publications:

- [An employer's guide to right to work checks](#)
- [Home Office Student and Child student caseworker guidance](#)

This change makes no difference to your work rights and restrictions.

If you do not have Student permission, you can find further information about work rights for other immigration permission categories on [gov.uk](#). Alternatively, find out more about your right to work as a dependant [on our website](#).

[Student sponsor with a track record](#)

You may work if your Student sponsor has a track record of compliance and your course is full-time. You can find this out by looking for 'track record' in the status column of the [register of Student sponsors](#) and checking the course level on your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

If your Student sponsor has a track record of compliance and your course is full-time, your hours of work are:

- Up to 20 hours a week in term time if you are studying for a qualification at degree level or above. This means that your course is at RQF level 6 or SCQF level 9 or higher.
- Up to 10 hours a week in term time if you are studying for a qualification below degree level.
- Full time outside term time (for study at all levels), which includes in vacations and before your course starts, on [work placements](#), and [after your course has ended](#).

Students sponsored to study a postgraduate course on a part-time basis may not work. This applies to term time and vacations.

Always check any limits on work that your university, college or school imposes or recommends. It is important that you do not exceed them.

[Overseas higher education institution](#)

You may work if you are on a study abroad programme and your sponsor is an overseas higher education institution. If your Student sponsor type is 'overseas higher education institution' in the sponsor type column in the [register of Student sponsors](#), your working hours are:

- Up to 20 hours a week in term time.
- Full time outside term time, which includes in vacations and before your course starts, on [work placements](#), and [after your course has ended](#).

Always check any limits on work that your university imposes or recommends. It is important that you do not exceed them.

Independent school

Child students who are under 16 years old are not allowed to work.

If you are a Child student aged 16 or over, you can work:

- Up to 10 hours a week in term time.
- Full time in vacations, including before your course starts, on [work placements](#), and [after your course has ended](#) (this is part of your vacation).

The situation is different if you have Student permission, and not Child student permission. You can work only if your independent school is a '[sponsor with a track record](#)' in the status column of the [register of Student sponsors](#).

Always check any limits on work that your school imposes or recommends. It is important that you do not exceed them.

If your school does not have a track record and you have Student permission, you are not allowed to work in or outside term time, but you might be able to take a [work placement](#) as part of your course.

Any other student sponsor

You are not allowed to work if your Student sponsor does not have the words 'track record' in the status column of the [register of Student sponsors](#), and is listed in the sponsor type column as:

- a private provider
- a publicly funded college
- an embedded college offering pathway courses

However, you might be able to take a [work placement](#) as part of your course.

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[Working after studies](#)
[Graduate route](#)
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Working hours

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If you have permission to work, working hours in term time must not exceed 10 or 20 hours a week, and you can work full time outside term time. However, it is important that you check any limits on work that your university, college or school imposes or recommends and that you do not exceed them.

A 'week' means any seven-day period starting on a Monday. You are responsible for ensuring that you do not exceed your weekly working hours, so it's essential to keep detailed records of your working hours. This is especially important if you work irregular hours or if you have more than one employer (inside or outside the UK) because employers may not know about work you do elsewhere.

'Term time' means the period when your Student sponsor expects you to be studying. 'Outside term time' means any other time. For example, the period before your course starts and after it ends, and vacations. You can usually find term dates on your institution's website or in your course information. If you can't find details of your course term dates on the website or information is contradictory, ask your Student sponsor for confirmation before starting full-time work to avoid breaching your work condition, even if it is by accident.

If you are a research student, you should ask your faculty, department or supervisor about how term time is defined for you – some institutions permit full-time work during agreed holidays or after submission of your viva, others do not. You must provide information about your term time to your employer.

Working hours and pay

Your pay and your working hours are separate. This means that you can work during a time when you get holiday pay for a different job. This is because only your hours actively working are counted. Make sure to check that your contract allows you to work for another employer.

For example, you have a job in a shop for 20 hours a week. When you are not working in the shop, because you are on leave and you are getting holiday pay, you can work up to 20 hours a week in term time on a short-term contract as a school assistant. Your hours of work must not exceed 20 a week. But you can get holiday pay at the same time as pay for your school assistant work.

The same principle applies to any extra money your employer pays you. Examples include but are not limited to: back pay, income tax credit after emergency tax, bonus payments, reimbursed expenses, increments for a retrospective pay increase. Extra money you receive for these reasons does not affect the number of hours you have worked or are working.

The UK government has more information about holiday pay [on their website](#).

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Work placements and internships

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Work placements and internships are an excellent way of getting work experience, which can help you make career decisions and apply for jobs after your course.

You can usually do a work placement as part of your course even if you are not permitted to take employment.

If you need help finding a work placement or internship, talk to your tutor or careers service.

[What is a work placement or internship?](#)

A work placement must be an assessed and be an integral part of your course. Usually, it must not be longer than one third of the total length of your course.

If you meet both of the following requirements, you can spend up to half of your course on work placements:

- Your course is at degree level or above. This means that your course results in a qualification at RQF level 6 or SCQF level 9 or above.
- Your sponsor is an overseas higher education institution. Or your sponsor has a 'track record' in the status column of the [register of Student sponsors](#).

You can treat an internship that meets these requirements as a work placement. In all other cases, it will be subject to the usual restrictions on student employment. This means that you cannot work full time during term time.

Your Student sponsor must:

- Stay connected with you during your work placement.
- Let the Home Office know that you will be working for part of your course.
- Provide a letter for your work placement provider which contains the terms and conditions of the placement and explain how your sponsor will assess it.

Your employer can pay you for your work placement. It can be full time, even in term time, and you can do it at the same time as other work. For more information about your potential employer's duties read the [Home Office's guidance for employers](#).

[Work placements outside the UK](#)

You might want to take a work placement outside the UK. Before you do this, check the immigration requirements of the country you want to work in and ask your Student sponsor if it will continue to sponsor you while you are outside the UK. If your sponsor withdraws its sponsorship, you will have to apply again to return to the UK.

[Can I change my decision to do or not do a work placement?](#)

Your Student visa should cover both your course of study and your work placement. Before you come to the UK, ask your institution how it will help you find work and what will happen if you are unable to find work. For example, you may have to leave the UK and apply again or finish your course early.

It is sometimes possible to decide after arriving in the UK to add a work placement to your course. You will usually have to make another Student route application. Discuss the timing of the application with your Student sponsor.

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What kind of work can you do?

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If you can work during your studies, you can apply for and accept jobs in most types of paid role, at any level. You are not restricted to working on campus.

The Home Office might question your working hours if you earn more than most students. This could be around £15,000 a year. There are no limits on what you may earn or on your hours of work in vacations and after study. But make sure you never exceed the limit on your weekly

working hours in term time. It is important that you do not let work interfere with making progress on your course.

[Our blog](#) looks at many types of work, and whether you can do them as a student.

[Paid work](#)

Once you have checked your work restrictions, you can contact your college or university's careers service. They should be able to offer you help with:

- Looking for suitable work including internships.
- Applying for a job.
- Interview techniques and practice.
- Recruiter events and job fairs.
- Contacting alumni who work in areas of interest to you.

You can also search for jobs online. Recruitment agencies and websites should not ask you to pay for help in applying for or getting work. The UK government has guidance on [your rights and safety when looking for a job](#).

You can work with Student permission as a [students' union sabbatical officer](#).

[Volunteering and unpaid work](#)

Volunteering offers the opportunity to undertake a wide range of activities. It is not paid, but you can meet new people and make a difference in your local community.

There are many ways of finding volunteering opportunities. Your Student sponsor can usually help, and here are some organisations who list volunteering opportunities in the UK:

- [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) (England)
- [Volunteer Scotland](#)
- [Volunteering Wales](#)
- [Volunteer Now](#) (Northern Ireland)

Unpaid employment (voluntary work) is not the same as volunteering. The [Student and Child Student casework guidance](#) explains that volunteers do not have a contract and must not be a substitute for an employee. Volunteers are not paid, though it is possible to receive reasonable travel and subsistence expenses. Volunteers usually help a charity, voluntary organisation or public sector organisation. Unpaid employment counts towards your weekly hours of work. If you have a work prohibition, you must not do anything that could be unpaid employment.

[Work you must not do](#)

There are some kinds of work you must not do including self-employment, business activity, professional sportsperson, entertainer, and permanent full-time job. There are some exceptions.

Self-employment

[UK government information about self-employment](#) explains when you are likely to be self-employed. For example, selling goods and services for profit, including online and through apps. The UK tax authority, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), can tell you if your proposed work would be self-employment. You can [contact HMRC](#) or use their [guidance and self-assessment tools](#).

Your employer might suggest that you work for them as a 'contractor' or on a 'freelance' basis. This is so that your employer does not have to do so much paperwork. You must not agree to this, as you might end up breaching your work condition.

Business activity

The [Student and Child Student casework guidance](#) provides examples of business activities. You can start to prepare a business if you intend to apply under a work route that allows this. For details, see [guidance for start-up and innovator endorsing bodies](#).

Professional sportsperson

This includes paid work as a sports coach. Information about sporting activities is in the [Student and Child Student casework guidance](#). Ask your student sponsor if you do not understand how it applies to your situation. There is an exception for students doing [work placements](#) on a course at degree level or above.

Entertainer

This includes paid work as an actor, musician, dancer or other performer. There is an exception for dance, drama and music students doing work placements. Your course must be at degree level or above.

Permanent full-time job

'Permanent' means there is no end date in your contract. You can do a permanent part-time job. Outside term time, you can do a full-time fixed-term job.

Doctor or dentist in training

You can work as a doctor or dentist in training only if you are on the foundation programme. This restriction does not apply to you if you applied for your permission on or after 1 December 2020.

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