

Travel and transport in the UK

The UK is well connected by various forms of transport. Including numerous train lines, airports, cycle paths, underground subways and roads. If you would like to drive while you're in the UK please [read our page](#) about it to ensure that you understand any restrictions.

Because the UK is a small country, you'll be able to see much more than just the location of your institution. Education UK has some great ['Explore the UK' guides](#) which we recommend reading.

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Cycling

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There are lots of cycle paths throughout the UK so you can ride your bike safely. Remember that not all cities are large enough to have secure cycle lanes, so you may need more experience to ride a bike in the city. There are some helpful tips from students at [Cycling UK](#); most notably to buy a second-hand bike if you can and to find other people that ride and cycle with them.

In London and a few other cities you can hire public bicycles for short periods. See [TfL](#) for details. We advise that you always wear a cycle helmet, high visibility jackets or bibs and use several lights at night. Cycle theft is common in the UK – so be sure to invest in a good lock and always leave your bicycle in a public area that is also well lit at night. There are a number of tips about locking your bicycle securely at [Wikihow](#). Be sure to register your bike with the National Cycle database, [Bike Register](#). This means that if your bicycle is stolen the police are able to track where it is. Your Students' Union may arrange for the police to attend your campus to provide information and help with this.

Trains

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Most towns in the UK have a train station; you can see the full list of stations at the [Trainline website](#). Your institution will have information about the nearest train station. You can look at [National Rail](#) or [Translink](#) to plan your journey.

16-25 year olds and full-time students can get 30% discount on train travel in the UK if you buy a [Young Persons Railcard](#) (currently £30). If you are over 25 you will need your institution to prove that you are eligible by confirming you are a full-time student. If you travel long distance just a few times, you will easily save more than the cost of the railcard.

Underground

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If you visit London, you'll probably need to use the Underground – 'the Tube'. To travel you can either buy a ticket on the day, buy an 'Oyster card' (this is a pre-paid card that costs £5 that you 'top up' with money) or use a contactless debit or credit card. This allows you to 'tap in' and 'tap out' by placing your card on a reader which opens gates to enter and exit the stations. Even if you travel to London only once, you may find you save money if you use an Oyster card as paper tickets are much more expensive. Check [where you can use your Oyster](#) (the area extends outside central London) because if you travel outside the permitted area you'll be fined.

If you are studying in London you can apply for an [18+ student Oyster card](#) which gives you 30% discount. If you are over 25 years old you will need your institution to prove that you are eligible.

The [Transport for London](#) website has extensive, useful information about travelling in London (by Tube, bus, bicycle and even suggested walking routes).

Buses

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Buses are often the cheapest way to travel and are usually for short journeys within your local area.

How you pay to travel on them varies between cities so we advise asking your institution. In some places you can buy a ticket from the driver when you board, in others you may have to buy a ticket from a machine before you board the bus. If you pay on the bus, some companies will require you to have the exact fare, others won't (you will find different bus companies operating in the same city with different rules). In London, you'll need a ticket in advance, Oyster card or contactless debit or credit card to pay.

The routes of the bus are often posted at every bus stop within the town. Alternatively you can use a travel app like [CityMapper](#). You may also get useful advice from your institution.

Trams

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Several cities including [Sheffield](#), [Manchester](#) and [Edinburgh](#) operate trams. Like buses, how you pay varies between cities. You may also be able to get student travel cards that cover trams. Your institutions will have information about these.

Coaches

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These are larger buses and usually for longer journeys. Have a look at [National Express](#) (England), [Translink](#) (Northern Ireland) and [CityLink](#) (Scotland) to see what's on offer. Many companies offer student discounts and some companies offer very cheap tickets for long distances including to countries outside the UK (eg [Megabus](#)).

Your Students' Union will be able to advise you and do ask other students for advice.

Domestic flights

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There are more than 20 commercial airports in the UK. This can be quicker than a long train journey and sometimes more affordable, so worth having a look. Explore [SkyScanner](#) or [Fly.co.uk](#) to compare prices.

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