INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The term ‘international students’ may seem a bit of a simplification. It can cover a huge variety of different experiences. You may be a native English speaker, or still learning the language. You may have lived in the UK for some time, and even studied here previously - or you may be completely new to the culture and expectations of universities in the UK. You may be studying on a course where there are a lot of other students from your home country, or you may be the only one.

For international students, preparing for success in UK study means more than just learning the language. You will have many questions about the culture and expectations of universities in the UK which can be quite different to what you have been used to. Even if you’ve been successful when studying in your home country, you will need to develop and adapt the way you study to succeed in the UK.

In this guide, we aim to show you some of the ways that the Library and Study Advice can help you to understand the expectations of your tutors when studying in the UK, and support you in developing the skills and knowledge you need to study successfully. There is also some information about building your cultural and language skills that may make you feel more at home as a valued part of the University community.

How can the library help?

We have plenty of suggestions that can help - but do remember that you can always get in touch with the Study Advice team or your Liaison Librarian if you have more questions.

University libraries can sometimes be daunting places - perhaps because you’ve not used a library as big before or you’ve never used one outside of your home country. However, using the Library is important if you wish to do well in your studies. It not only provides access to printed materials and study space, but many online resources (e-journals, e-books and databases) as well as specialist help, from liaison librarians and Study Advisers.

This page has information to help you make the most of the Library and its resources during your time at Reading. Go to our online guide at https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international for links to websites with more information about each topic.

New to Reading?

✓ Information for new students

All the information you need to get started with using the Library at Reading

Watch our Welcome video to help you find your way around when you come to the Library for the first time.

Resources in the Library

✓ Language dictionaries

The Library has a comprehensive collection of printed dictionaries (in the 3rd Floor Dictionaries section) for all languages taught at the University. Additionally, access is provided to online dictionaries, such as Oxford Dictionaries, encyclopaedias and other reference sources which you can use on or off-campus.

✓ Foreign language material

Use the Enterprise catalogue to find language materials, such as books and films on DVD, in the Library. To limit your search to the language you want, either run your search and then use the
‘Language’ limit on the left of the screen, or select the advanced search option and select the language you want before you search.

- Books on studying in the UK
To find books on studying in the UK search the Enterprise catalogue for “study skills international students”.

- Improving your English language skills
The Library has a large collection of English and American novels; films on DVD; and textbooks for learning English, including books to help with IELTS (International English Language Test Score). Search Enterprise to find them.

- Credo Reference [full-text]
Information from dictionaries and other reference works in all subjects. Features a translation tool to translate the text into one of over sixty languages.

- Teaching Practice Collection
The Library’s Teaching Practice Collection contains recent children’s fiction and non-fiction, a range of textbooks to GCSE level, music scores and multimedia items. A fun way to improve your English language skills could be to read books from this extensive collection of children’s literature.

- Newspapers
A good way to practise your language skills and, at the same time, learn something about UK culture is to read newspapers. The Library subscribes to a number of newspapers in print and online, or you could learn more about the local area by reading a local newspaper.

- Self-Access Centre for Language Learning (SACLL)
Separate from the Library, the International Study and Language Institute (ISLI) has its own collection of language learning materials available to students in the Self-Access Centre for Language Learning (SACLL), located in Edith Morley 230. It includes resources to help you develop your English for Academic Purposes, including recorded lectures to practise your listening skills.

Help
Your librarian
Each Department/School has a liaison librarian who can help with finding resources in that subject or any other Library enquiry.

Study Advice Team
Helping students to achieve study success with guides, video tutorials, seminars and one-to-one advice sessions.

The Library website
- Finding and using information
More on how to make the most of the Library’s resources
- Library guides
Guides to help you find and use information in your studies.
- Contacts and support
Information on contacting the Library, wherever you are - in person, online, by email, or by post.

Library words explained
Find out the meanings of words and vocabulary used in the Library.

Studying in UK Universities
Even if you have been used to studying at university level in another country, you are likely to find that there are many differences when studying in the UK that follow from the specific academic culture that we have in the UK.

This page brings together brief guidance on some of the differences in studying that you might find, with links so you can find out more if you need to.

Understanding UK university study
The main purpose of higher education in the UK is to develop students’ ability to take a critical view of the world. You will not only be discovering new knowledge about your chosen subject, but also thinking about how that knowledge works: why is this idea more believable than another, how was the idea developed, what can you do
with it to make new knowledge (e.g. by applying it to practical experience, or comparing it to other ideas).

This purpose leads to other important aspects of UK university-level study. For instance:

- We are more interested in your ability to question and challenge the authoritative view than to just repeat it.
- Your tutors will expect you to select reading, and perhaps to find texts beyond your reading list.
- You will be working towards becoming co-creators of knowledge with your tutors - so they will expect you to be more equal with them than you may be used to.
- In the UK, we place strong importance on punctuality and timeliness, so you will need to organise yourself to avoid lateness with attendance and submitting work.

You can help yourself to find out more about what it's like to move into university study in the UK by reading through these guides:

- Study skills for success (UKCISA)
  Guidance on many aspects of university study in the UK for international students
- Prepare for Success
  An interactive website with lots of activities to help you feel more prepared for study in the UK
- New to University guide
  A guide to studying in UK higher education for all students coming to it for the first time.

**Developing effective practices for UK study**

The best way to develop your study skills is to practise them! For instance, reading academic texts may seem hard at first, but the more you do it, the easier it will become.

There's a lot you can do for yourself to find out how to develop your skills:

- For study skills, have a look at our Study Guides or watch a video tutorial.
- To find out more about using the Library, see their training guides and videos.
- If you're not sure about something to do with your course, ask your course tutor.
- Many professional services at the University offer free seminars and workshops.
- If you have a quick query (for example, how to reference a particular text), ask at the Study Advice information desk about their drop-in service.

If you have tried all of these and still feel there's something you don't understand, you can book an individual advice session with a Study Adviser or Liaison Librarian.

Go to our online guide at [https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international](https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international) for links to the suggestions below.

- Finding and using information

More on how to make the most of the Library's resources:

- Study Guides
  Expert guides from the Study Advice team at the University of Reading to help you develop your academic skills for study success.
- Library guides
  Guides to help you find and use information in your studies.
- Academic Phrasebank
  Use this site for examples of linking phrases and ways to refer to sources.
- EndNote video tutorials
  A suite of videos covering all aspects of using EndNote.
- One-to-one study advice
  Booked and drop-in sessions with our friendly expert Study Advisers.
- Study Advice seminars and events
  Seminars and other teaching sessions on academic skills from the Study Advice team.
Studying with academic integrity

Academic integrity refers to the values that underpin everything you do in your university studies. The purpose of academic study for both students and tutors is not just to develop and build new knowledge but to do it in ways that maximise accuracy and fairness across the academic community. In order to achieve this, you need to understand, develop and practise particular academic skills, including:

* correct referencing
* good academic writing
* independent thinking and active reading practices
* the ability to find and evaluate sources
* efficient notemaking and record-keeping.

**Essential tip:** The best way to avoid unintentional plagiarism in your writing is to understand how the principles of academic integrity work in academic study in the UK.

Our Academic Integrity Toolkit will help you develop the tools you need to avoid plagiarism and succeed at university by studying with academic integrity. Go to our online guide at https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international for links.

Proof-reading and editing

If English is not your first language, you may feel that you would like someone to read through your work to check that your expression is correct. There is no proof-reading service available through the University. If you feel you need to develop your academic English skills, do consider attending the University's Academic English Programme (link above). The Study Advisers can discuss how to make your writing practices more appropriate for UK academic writing. We also have guidance on academic writing, including effective proof-reading to help you to check your own work.

If you do feel you need your work to be reviewed by someone else, we suggest you try to find a native English speaker to read through with you so you can correct as you go along - not to correct it for you. This can lead to errors creeping into your work as other people may change the meaning of your writing. For the same reason, we do not usually recommend that you use professional proof-readers or editors. If you do decide to do so be aware that the University has policies about this, and that you must declare any professional assistance that you receive.

- **Use of editorial and proof reading services**
  The University policy on the use of proof reading and editorial services.

- **Academic writing guide**
  Guide to what you need to know about writing appropriately and correctly for UK higher education, including information on effective proof-reading.

Go to our online guide at https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international for links to these.

Preparing for exams in the UK

In your university degree, you will be assessed by various methods. These are likely to include written examinations. If you are an international student, these may be quite different to the examination or other assessment methods you are used to. For instance, we do not usually have oral exams (except on language courses), and many exams require you to write essays rather than short answers.

Our guide on Preparing for exams has more information on the best ways to revise and what to think about when you're in the exam room, as well as specific information on Assessment by examination in UK higher education including

- features of written exams in the UK
- what you need to find out
- helping yourself to get better results
- tipsheets and exercises
- what to do if you're feeling anxious
- links to our video tutorials
Building your Language Skills

How the University can help

The University offers a range of services through the International Study and Language Institute to help you build your cultural and language knowledge, including the Academic English Programme and the Self Access Centre for Language Learning.

A good way to practise your language skills and, at the same time, learn something about UK culture is to read newspapers. The Library subscribes to a number of newspapers in print and online, or you could learn more about the local area by reading a local newspaper.

The Library has many resources that can help you to build your language skills, including books to help with IELTS (International English Language Test Score) and language dictionaries. These can all be found on the 3rd Floor. While you're there, you might also borrow a novel to practise your reading for pleasure, or a film on DVD to help your listening skills. Alternatively, a fun way to improve your English language skills is by using the Teaching Practice Collection which includes an extensive collection of children's literature in English, both fiction and non-fiction.

Go to our online guide at https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international for links to these suggestions.

- Academic English Programme (AEP)
- Self-Access Centre for Language Learning (SACLL)
- Newspapers

How to find and access newspapers in the University of Reading Library

- Teaching Practice Collection

The Teaching Practice Collection (TPC) at the University Library contains recent children’s fiction and non-fiction, a range of textbooks to GCSE level, music scores and multimedia items including kits, scientific models, and picture sets.

Resources outside the University

As well as the resources provided by the University there are many more, including some from other universities, that can help you to build your language skills. Here are a few that will be helpful. Go to our online guide at https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international for links.

- Learn English (British Council)
- English for Uni (University of Adelaide)
- Get Reading
- Google Translate

A quick way to check any words you're not sure of. Note that this is not suitable for translating writing into English for an academic assignment.

Living in the UK

Helping you to settle in

Whether this is your first time in the UK, or you've visited before, you are likely to find some aspects of UK life surprising. Why are we so obsessed with talking about the weather? Why do we get so cross if you don't join the end of a queue? Why is it expected that you will be a little late for a social engagement - but frowned upon if you are five minutes late for a lecture?
The best way to get used to the culture in the UK is to join in, and ask people if you’re surprised by something. They will probably be surprised and interested themselves to find out that anyone does it differently!

Here are some services to help you settle in to life in the UK. Go to our online guide at https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international for links.

- **International Student Advice**
  Webpages for international students at the University of Reading, including information on the International Advice Team, visas and immigration and studying and living in the UK.

- **XE Currency Converter**
  Helpful if you’re getting used to UK currency.

- **Facing culture shock (UKCISA)**
  How to prepare for differences in culture with tips to help you through it

- **Visit Britain**
  The official tourism website of the UK. Find out more about the UK and maybe find some great places to visit while you’re studying here.

- **World Weather Information**
  Find out more about the weather here and at home.

- **Watching the English (rev.ed.)** by Kate Fox
  Shelf location: 301.20942-FOX
  Publication Date: 2014
  A book that explains more about the hidden rules of English behaviour.

**Where can you get support?**

There are many people who can support you in your studies and language learning. We have listed some here. Go to our online guide at https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international for links.

- **Contact your subject liaison librarian**
  Each Department/School has a liaison librarian who can help with finding resources in that subject or any other Library enquiry.

- **Study Advice**
  Helping students to achieve study success with guides, video tutorials, seminars and one-to-one advice sessions.

- **Maths Support Centre**
  Help with the maths and statistics you need to succeed in your studies.

- **International Student Advice**
  Webpages for international students at the University of Reading, including information on the International Advice Team, visas and immigration and studying and living in the UK.

- **Academic English Programme (AEP)**
  The AEP offers training courses for students whose first language is not English.

- **Self-Access Centre for Language Learning (SACLL)**
  Resources to help you develop your English for Academic Purposes, including recorded lectures to practise your listening skills

- **English language support for doctoral researchers**
  A programme of English language support in various aspects of PhD study for research postgraduates at the University of Reading.

- **Academic Phrasebank**
  Use this site for examples of linking phrases and ways to refer to sources.

- **Study skills for success (UKCISA)**
  Guidance on many aspects of university study in the UK for international students.

- **Learn English (British Council)**
  High quality resources to help improve your English.

- **Prepare for Success**
An interactive website with lots of activities to help you feel more prepared for study in the UK.

- **English for Uni (University of Adelaide)**
  Engaging learning resources which aim to make difficult grammar and academic writing concepts easier to understand.

- **Writing in English for university study**
  A free MOOC developed at the University of Reading.

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This guide reproduces the text of our LibGuide on **Studying as an international student**. The online guide has links to additional information and can be found at:

https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/international

For tips and guidance on other academic skills, see the Study Advice website at

www.reading.ac.uk/library/study-advice