

2023
2024



International Student Guide

Welcome to
#UniAsItShouldBe



The University of Bolton prides itself on being a **friendly university** which strives to ensure all students succeed in their studies with us!

There may be times when you need to contact different members of staff at the University. You can find staff contact details on our dedicated 'Staff Search' section on our website.

How to access support available

You can access support in person, online and via our dedicated support webpages. www.bolton.ac.uk/student-life/student-support/student-services. Our staff are here to support you when you need it, please do come to the Student Centre to speak with one of our team. We have a dedicated International Student Support team based in the Student Centre, Chancellor's Mall, which is open 08:45 to 17:00, Monday to Friday.

Collecting your BRP in the UK

If you have received a vignette sticker in your passport you will need to collect your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) after arrival in the UK. The BRP is evidence of your Student immigration status in the UK. The decision letter notifying you of your successful visa application will confirm where you should collect your BRP. This will either be at a designated Post Office or at the University, depending on which you selected on the visa application form.

Meet our International Student Support Team



Aimee Kirton

International Student Advisor



Ansh Sachdeva

International Student Officer

Immigration requirements & compliance responsibilities

It is important you fully understand and comply with the responsibilities of your student visa and co-operate with the University in fulfilling its sponsor duties. You should ensure you read the 'Your responsibilities on a student visa'. Which can be found here: www.gov.uk/student-visa

Can I work in the UK?

You are permitted to work in the UK, but **MUST** follow the guidance below;

- Maximum number of hours you can work per week is stated on your BRP (up to 20 hours per week)
- This is the maximum number of hours you can work in any week
- Definition of a week is Monday to Sunday
- Term time – any time you are undertaking academic work

Working in the UK – what work you can't undertake;

- You can't be a professional sports person or coach
- You can't be a professional entertainer
- You can't work on a self-employed basis – this means you cannot set up your own business. It may also be called freelance and may include jobs such as delivery drivers, taxi driver, interpreter/translator and personal tutor
- If you are unsure about the work you are offered please check with the International Student Support Team before starting the work





Scan me to access
your Student Portal



Essential info for getting started

Accommodation

When looking for accommodation it is extremely important to do your research. The advice is not to sign up for accommodation, especially for a room, via a website that is not on a reputable source such as Rightmove, unless you are very certain that it is genuine.

The University's recommended accommodation is Orlando Village. You can find further information for Orlando here: <https://orlandovillage.co.uk> It is in a fantastic location, only a 10-minute walk away from both the main university campus and town centre. The rooms are offered on a self-catering basis with a communal kitchen, WC and washing facility. Orlando Village enjoys a communal social building named 'The Hub' which includes a TV, table tennis, pool table and football table which is ideal for meeting friends.

Private accommodation is also located throughout the town. There are rooms available in shared houses with landlords or with fellow students, along with individual houses and flats. We would strongly advise you to view a property in person, or have a reliable contact view, before agreeing to a contract with a landlord. Our Students' Union Office can advise you of how to search for private

accommodation and what to look for when entering into a contract with a private landlord. Organising private accommodation would mean contacting the landlord of the property to make arrangements. You may wish to look at the UKCISA site for information and advice for international students finding accommodation in the UK.

International student support loan

If you are an International student, it's unlikely you will be able to get a student loan from the UK Government. The university has created the International Student Support Loan which provides up to £400, for students when they require immediate or urgent support if you're interested to know more contact the International Student Support team at internationalstudents@bolton.ac.uk or via the Student Centre in Chancellor's Mall to find out more about this loan and what the eligibility requirements are.

Student ID cards

All students are required to wear their student ID card with the lanyard provided, when accessing the University facilities.

The lanyard must be worn on the outside of clothing to ensure the ID card is visible.

You can collect your Student ID card after your ID verification at the University of Bolton. The ID verification requires students to present their valid ID Documents to the University. ID cards are issued in the Student Centre once the ID Verification has been completed. If your ID card is lost or stolen you should speak to the Student Advisors. The fee for a replacement student card is £10.

Official University letters

Students often need an "official letter" or enrolment letter from their study provider to prove that they are enrolled as a student for a number of reasons - gym membership, for their employer or sponsor, to register with a local GP, for their bank or local Council, certain benefits, and many more. Apart from bank letters, our letter is not addressed to anyone specifically and we refer to it as a "To Whom It May Concern" or TWIMC letter.

You can request a TWIMC letter quickly and easily from your Student Portal https://evision.bolton.ac.uk/urdsits.urd/run/siw_lgn by following these steps:

1. Log in to your Student Portal
2. Check your address details - both your home and term time address. These addresses will be included on your letter and must be correct so that there are no problems with the use of the letter for your intended purpose
3. Submit a "To Whom It May Concern Letter" request - you will be asked to state the purpose of your letter within the request. Please note that stating "For proof of study" or similar is not sufficient - we need to know

what or who you need the letter for so that we issue you a letter with the correct information

Once submitted, the request is received by the Student Advisors. We will then aim to issue your letter within five working days and this will be sent to your University email address through a PDF attachment.

Sometimes we are unable to issue letters if you have an outstanding debt with the University or if your attendance does not meet our minimum requirement to issue a letter.

Council tax exemption

Council tax is paid to the local authorities for services they provide and applies to residential properties. Full-time students on courses of one academic year (9 months) or longer are normally exempt from having to pay council tax if they live in University accommodation or private accommodation where everyone who lives in the property is a full time student. If these are your circumstances, you can apply for an exemption.

For students living in Greater Manchester we confirm their status with the council electronically after enrolment. Your spouse and / or children should also be exempt if they are in the UK as your visa dependent. All International & Home, Full time students may be exempt or entitled to a reduction of their Council Tax bill. Students should apply for student discount with their local council. Students living outside of Greater Manchester will need to request a council tax certificate via the Student Portal. https://evision.bolton.ac.uk/urdsits.urd/run/siw_lgn



Seeing the sights



Travelling in Europe

Depending on your nationality, you may need to apply for a visa prior to travelling to mainland Europe. For guidance on the visa process and requirements, visit the website of the Visa Application Centre in the UK of the relevant country (e.g. French Visa Application Centre in the UK).

Be cautious of obtaining information online about the visa application requirements from an unofficial source.

If you do require a visa and wish to travel to more than one European country, you should consider applying for a Schengen visa which allows you to visit the following countries on one visa: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

You would also require a letter of support from the University stating that you are a current student and dates you are planning to travel. To obtain this letter, you must have completed all your coursework and have no outstanding debt to the University.

The visa application requirements vary depending on the embassy where you apply for the Schengen visa. Most applications will require you to submit your passport, recent photograph(s), your UK visa, evidence of funds, a letter confirming your student status, evidence of travel insurance, travel plans and application fee.

Please note that some countries will require you to have between three to six months remaining on your UK student visa. The earliest you can apply for a Schengen visa is 3 months before you travel, but you should make your application in good time.

Travelling in the UK

Trains are usually the most convenient way to travel to other parts of Great Britain. Tickets should be booked in advance and as early as possible to save money. Tickets are generally available 12 weeks before the date of travel. There are various online train booking sites that offer discounted tickets or you can book direct from National Rail.

If you are aged 16-25, or a full-time student aged 26 or older, you can apply for a discount rail card which costs £30 for one year and can save you a 1/3 off most rail fares across Great Britain. Tickets should be booked in advance. National Express coaches run from Manchester to many parts of Great Britain. If you're a full-time student, the Young Persons Coach card allows you to save a 1/3 on standard fares.





Homesickness

The decision to study at Bolton brings many opportunities and new experiences, but with any major transition it may also bring challenges. Feeling homesick can be one of them, even if you've already lived abroad. It is one of the emotional states that can be a part of what is known as culture shock.

Homesickness is a common experience for international students - and for many British students who leave home for the first time. It can affect people in different forms: e.g. coming in waves, or slowly building up over time. Sometimes it seems more like a physical illness, e.g. feeling tired, unwell, or lacking in energy. It can appear when you're not expecting it- for example, when things have gone well. The trigger in this case can be having no one really close or special with whom to share the experience.

Symptoms of homesickness can include:

- Feeling down-hearted, tearful or anxious
- Feeling lost or lonely
- Longing and grief for your former life
- Being unable to stop contacting people at home or feeling withdrawn and not wanting to engage with the current environment
- Being absent-minded, or finding it difficult to concentrate
- Feeling unwell
- Brooding on the past

Common triggers may include:

- When the 'honeymoon period' has worn off, i.e. Bolton no longer seems wonderful or exciting
- When you have doubts about your decision to study here
- When the demands of your course have become more real, and your self-confidence is affected
- If the local culture feels confusing, unwelcoming, or just too different
- If you miss a major celebration, holiday, family reunion or important event happening at home
- When a crisis occurs and your parents, friends or partner aren't there to provide help and support

There may be other causes, depending on your particular circumstances. But the most important thing to remember is that homesickness is normal. Be patient with yourself as you adjust. Try to accept that feeling comfortable in Bolton will take some time. It helps if you can encourage yourself, and if you can remember that you are not alone in feeling this way.

Things you can do to cope with homesickness

It can be tempting to seek the security of your own space, but don't hide in your room for too long. Reach out to others, invite people for a cup of tea or coffee, or for a meal. Go into town, for a walk by the river, or see a film. Don't be afraid to talk about your experience of homesickness, but try to stay positive.

Meeting up with others from your own culture can be an antidote to loneliness, and an essential source of comfort. But it's equally important to leave your comfort zone from time to time. The opportunities in Bolton are many and varied- get involved, and see what activities and events are taking place.

Many international students post blogs, keep journals, take photographs, or find other mediums to help them get through times of homesickness and culture shock. A photo journal or blog can become a way of documenting your life at Bolton, sharing with others what you experienced, what you've learned, and how you faced up to any obstacles along the journey.

If you continue to feel very upset and lonely, or nothing seems to make a difference, consider talking things over in confidence with the University of Bolton's Life Lounge team. The Life Lounge is a confidential, free service to students to support them with their mental health and wellbeing.

For more information about how to request an appointment, email: lifelounge@bolton.ac.uk or www.bolton.ac.uk/student-life/student-support/life-lounge

Frequently asked questions

1. What's my university username?

Your University of Bolton username, sometimes referred to as your network ID, it will typically look like this: **abc1hss**

Your username is issued to you when you enrol or join the University.

Students who have forgotten their username can use the online username lookup service.

2. I don't know/have forgotten my password?

Students who have forgotten their University of Bolton network password can reset it using the Student Password Reset portal.

Staff should contact IT Support on **01204 903 444** or visit the Library Helpdesk during staffed hours.

3. How can I access my timetable?

Your personal timetable will be available (where possible) 24 hours after enrolment at: <https://timetables.bolton.ac.uk/LdapLogin>

In the meantime, a generic course timetable can be found at <https://timetables.bolton.ac.uk>. Click 'courses' on the 'type' drop down box and start to enter the name of your course (or the course code shown above) in the 'Resource(s)' section.

Please note, timetables are subject to change. If your course has more than one group then you may not be required to attend all the sessions on the timetable. You will be advised which sessions to attend when your personal timetable is generated. In the meantime your course leader may be able to advise which group you have been placed in and also what days you should be on campus.

If not all modules appear on your personal timetable then please email academic-office@bolton.ac.uk. If you have another timetable related query please email timetables@bolton.ac.uk

4. How can I pay my fees?

You can make payments for tuition fees either online or in person.

The secure online payment facility allows you to pay invoices or make payments on account to the University of Bolton. For students, it also

allows you to see the balance on outstanding invoices. This is the link for the payments page on the University website: www.bolton.ac.uk/student-life/fees-and-funding/payments/

To make a payment in person, you will need to go to the Financial Services office which is in The Chancellor's Building and you will find this next to the Bolton SU Shop.

5. Is there any Academic Support at the University?

The University has a variety of Academic Support options which include the Student Liaison Officers. The Student Liaison Officers can help with study skills, referencing, paraphrasing, academic writing, time management. As well as assisting support and guidance with Academic Appeals, Mitigating Circumstances, Academic Misconduct and supported study. To find out more email slo@bolton.ac.uk.

Leap Online is also an online tool which is available to students. You can find this on the website through this link: www.bolton.ac.uk/leaponline/Home.aspx LEAP Online is designed to support your academic and personal development. Each section contains information, videos and activities for you to carry out.

6. What is the process for applying for letters? (such as, work, travel, and bank)

Students often need an "official letter" or enrolment letter from their study provider to prove that they are enrolled as a student for a number of reasons - gym membership, for their employer or sponsor, to register with a local GP, for their bank or local Council, certain benefits, and many more. Apart from bank letters, our letter is not addressed to anyone specifically and we refer to it as a "To Whom It May Concern" or TWIMC letter.

You can request a TWIMC letter quickly and easily from your Student Portal by following these steps:

1. Log in to your Student Portal.
2. Check your address details - both your home and term time address. These addresses will be included on your letter and must be correct so that there are no problems with the use of the letter for your intended purpose.

3. Submit a "To Whom It May Concern Letter" request - you will be asked to state the purpose of your letter within the request. Please note that stating "for proof of study" or similar is not sufficient - we need to know what or who you need the letter for so that we issue you a letter with the correct information.

Once submitted, the request is received by the Student Advisors. We will then aim to issue your letter within five working days and this will be sent to your University email address through a PDF attachment.

Sometimes we are unable to issue letters if you have an outstanding debt with the University or if your attendance does not meet our minimum requirement to issue a letter. https://evision.bolton.ac.uk/urd/sits.urd/run/siw_lgn

7. How do I apply for a travel letter if I want to travel abroad?

You can only travel during a period when there is no teaching according to the academic calendar. You need to inform the team the dates you will be travelling and when you plan to return. Additionally, you need to provide the address of the Embassy or TLS center where you are applying. A letter of travel can only be issued if you have 80% attendance, no outstanding debt to the University, and all coursework has been completed. In the case of an emergency please submit a request and these will be looked at on a case by case basis.

8. How do I get a National Insurance Number?

If you do not already have a National Insurance number, you only need to apply for one if you're planning to work.

You can start work without a National Insurance number if you can prove you have the right to work in the UK.

Please log onto the Gov.uk website to apply for your National Insurance Number. The link is attached here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number>

9. Is it possible for me to work more than 20 hours per week?

The number of hours permitted per week that you can work will be stated on your BRP card. This is the maximum that you can work

in a week. The definition of a week is Monday to Sunday. You may be able to work more hours during vacation times but this is course dependant. Please seek guidance on this if you are unsure.

- If you're a master's student you may be working on your dissertation over the summer period and the 20 hours restriction will continue
- If you have any other academic work to complete e.g. assignments, external exams or repeating an exam you will be restricted to 20 hours per week
- If you are undertaking a placement during the summer, you will be restricted to 20 hours per week
- If you are a PhD student you can work Maximum of 20 hours per week with the exception of Christmas closure which will be confirmed by the Research and Graduate School - this is not confirmed on the academic calendar

10. What are the requirements for applying for a Graduate Visa?

You can apply for a Graduate visa if all of the following are true:

- You're in the UK
- Your current visa is a Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa
- You studied a UK bachelor's degree, postgraduate degree or other eligible course for a minimum period of time with your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa
- Your education provider (such as your university or college) has told the Home Office you've successfully completed your course

The International Team will confirm to UKVI those students who have successfully completed their course. For applying you would require a valid passport, your Biometric residence permit (BRP), your Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) reference. You can find more information at www.gov.uk/graduate-visa

Key contacts

International Student Support



+44 (0) 1204 903 813

+44 (0) 1204 903 828



internationalstudents@bolton.ac.uk



Student Centre, Chancellor's Mall,
Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB.

Student Centre



+44 (0) 1204 903 733



studentadvisors@bolton.ac.uk



Student Centre, Chancellor's Mall,
Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB.

Life Lounge

(Mental Health & Wellbeing Team)



+44 (0) 1204 903 566



lifelounge@bolton.ac.uk



Student Centre, Chancellor's Mall,
Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB.

Students' Union



+44 (0) 1204 900 850



info@boltonsu.com



Chancellor's Mall, Deane Road,
Bolton, BL3 5AB.



University
of Bolton

GREATER MANCHESTER

www.bolton.ac.uk