

Information Guide
for Students and Visitors
to the United Kingdom

By

Nigeria Muslim Forum
United Kingdom

Fifth Edition August, 2007



1. Introduction

This information package is prepared by the Nigerian Muslim Forum (NMF) in the United Kingdom which was established in 1991. The Forum is an organisation that seeks to bring together Nigerian Muslims studying or working in the UK.

Many Nigerians coming to the UK for the first time face enormous difficulties for lack of information to make their travel arrangements easier. In its on-going programmes to enhance the quality of life of Nigerians at home and abroad, the Forum felt that there is a growing need to provide an information package to assist Nigerian Muslims coming to study, visit or work in the UK. Other areas of importance include immigration, accommodation and employment.

The British society is not an Islamic one and therefore there are some socio-cultural and religious differences. Living in the UK requires an understanding of its people, their ways of life and day to day activities which include food and shopping, race relations, security, health and education. The Forum has branches in major towns in the UK which organize weekly programmes for its members. It is advisable to participate in such activities. Some Islamic centers and mosques also provide facilities which could be used to enhance our overall well being and development.

This Information Package is not comprehensive but contains suggestions and advice based on our experiences while living in the UK. The contents of the guide are accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of writing. But rules and regulations often change and the reader is therefore encouraged to make further enquiries from the British High Commission or other appropriate bodies for up-to-date information. It is our hope that this guide will be of benefit not only to new comers, but to others living in the UK as well.



2. Immigration Requirements

2.1 Prospective Students

Prospective students should apply to the British High commission in their country for a visa or entry permit in order to pursue their studies. The following documents must be provided by the applicant before the immigration officer issues a visa or entry permit:

Letter of acceptance from University/College stating that the applicant has fulfilled admission requirements, and duration of course of study.

Evidence of availability of sponsorship from an awarding body covering fees, maintenance, accommodation and any other financial obligations e.g. books allowance, clothing e.t.c.

Evidence of possession of a return air-ticket at the end of course.

2.2 Full-time Students

These are students in full-time education and not part-time. Only those who are ordinarily resident in the UK are allowed part-time education.

After obtaining an entry permit from your home country, then upon arrival in the UK, the immigration officer at the airport will normally put a leave-to-remain stamp in your passport after certifying the validity of the relevant documents.

Leave-to-remain for 12 months is occasionally stamped in one's passport even when the course exceeds 12 months. This can be extended either yearly or for the whole period of study remaining. A visa extension can be applied for either directly from the Home Office (Immigration and Nationality Section) or through the Students' Union of one's University/College. Application for visa extension can also be made through the student's High Commission or Embassy in the UK (this is only possible after having registered with the High commission/Embassy on arrival into the UK).

Some institutions through their Students' Unions make arrangements with the Home Office to send immigration officers at certain periods of the year (twice or thrice), to interview students needing visa extensions. Valid reasons should normally be given for visa extensions. The student is also required to provide supporting documents, such as letter from the institution or student's supervisor (confirming student's reason for extension) and evidence of financial support e.g. letter of award of sponsorship or bank statement.

Those students who have been given leave-to-remain for more than six months may travel abroad and return to the UK without requiring a re-entry visa provided one returns before the expiry of the visa.

2.3 Short-term Students and Academic visitors

These categories are normally given leave-to-remain for 6 months or less. A visitor's visa cannot be extended beyond six months in the UK under any circumstances. Visitors must therefore leave on the expiration of their visa. At the end of one's studies, one may register with his/her institution as a visitor, usually with the consent of one's supervisor (this normally applies to those who have completed PhD programme). In this case the institution can request for a three- or six-month visa for the visitor.



For those who arrived into the UK with visitor's visa and subsequently intend to change the visa to a student's visa, they must do this through any British Embassy/High Commission abroad (preferably their own country). They must also satisfy all the necessary admission requirements.

2.4 Fees

Overseas students pay higher fees than home students (UK citizens) who pay about one third of the total payable fees. Bench fees are required by some institutions in addition to University fees (this only applies to science and engineering students pursuing postgraduate research).

3. Travel/Arrival Procedure

3.1 Arrival at the Airport

Gatwick or Heathrow airports are the main points of arrival for most people coming to the UK. You can also land at other destinations including Manchester and Birmingham airline permitting.

3.2 Immigration/Passport Control

After getting off the plane, you will enter the arrival hall for immigration/passport control formalities. Here, you will find three different queues, one for British passport holders, another for European community (EC) nationals and the third for all other nationalities. Be sure to join the appropriate queue. When it is your turn you will be asked to present the following:

1. Your passport
2. Letter of acceptance to a course of study at a college or University or proofs for other genuine reasons for entry into the UK
3. A proof that you have sufficient funds to meet the cost of your studies, that is, the tuition fees, your maintenance and the maintenance of any dependents
4. Proof of entry clearance, i.e., a visa, entry certificate or letter of consent which should have been obtained from the British High Commission.

At the end of the checks above, your passport will be stamped. This stamp states the period that you are permitted to remain in the UK. Do not worry at this stage if the time of stay given in your passport is shorter than the period you intend to stay. This will be rectified later, through the help of Student Unions, Citizens' Advice Bureau or Immigration Aid Units.

3.3 Problems at Immigration/Passport Control

You will not have problems if you arrive with the correct papers. If you are refused entry and do not have entry clearance you may be removed from the country immediately or given a temporary admission to sort out your affairs. If this happens you should seek help from the following:

Joint Council For the Welfare of Immigrants,
115 Old Street, London EC1 9JR.
Tel. 0207-251 8708



Immigration Advisory Service,
2nd Floor, 190 Great Dover Street,
London SE1 4YB.
Tel. 0207-967 1200

3.4 Luggage/Baggage

At the luggage collecting points do try and get a trolley as airports are very large and you will have to walk some distance.

Baggage areas can appear confusing but there is no need to worry. All luggage comes through a carousel system once unloaded from the plane. Above each of the carousel systems there will be a sign stating the number and point of origin of the flight. You may have to wait here for your luggage. Once your luggage is collected you can then move on to customs. There are two ways to get to the customs, the green and the red gates. If you have valuables to declare or are not sure then pass through the red gate. Otherwise pass through the green one.

3.5 Lost Luggage

Lost or damaged luggage should be reported to the airline/handling agent. Baggage facilities desks operated by handling agents are located in the baggage reclaim halls and staff there will record and sort out any problems.

3.6 Disabled Facilities

If you have a disability or you will need assistance at the airport or in-flight, tell your airline or travel agent when booking, advising them of the nature and extent of your disability. Check also whether the airline makes any charge for special assistance, such as the use of a motorised buggy/wheelchair or ambulance at airports.

Money/Currency

The official currency is the pound sterling and there is no restriction on the amount of money (British or Foreign) that can be brought into the UK. It is advisable to bring with you about £200 to cover travel fares, meals and other expenses. Be careful with the money you carry as it may get lost or stolen. Most banks open at 9.00 a.m. and close around 4.00 p.m. and "Bureaux de change" open for longer hours but their exchange rates are higher.

3.7 Refreshment

Facilities for refreshment are available at all airports. Food and drink including vegetarian meals can be purchased.

3.1 Toilet Facilities

These are available throughout the airports with mother and baby changing facilities provided. There are symbols on toilet doors showing which toilets are for males, females and disabled. Prayer facilities can also be found at some airports namely terminal 3 at Heathrow.



Public Telephones

These are situated throughout the airports, train and bus stations. You may need 10, 20 and 50 pence coins to make a phone call. The minimum charge for a telephone call is 30 pence.

3.2 Travel to and from the Airport

Both Gatwick and Heathrow airports are connected to all parts of the UK with good rail, air and road networks. It is cheaper to travel by bus (coach).

Travel services within the UK operate on a 24 hour basis. You should note, however that, the timings given in the travel timetables are on a 24-hour clock basis (not am/pm). It is always faster to travel by rail than by bus (coach) but you will pay more. If you have any problems please ask for assistance. People are generally happy to help. Information centers can be found at all airports, coach and railway stations.

4. Accommodation

Considering the cultural and climatic differences between Nigeria and the UK, the accommodation you find (in UK) can have a considerable influence on your spiritual and educational performances. In this section you will In-sha-Allah find descriptions of the different types of accommodation available and also some recommendations on the advantages and disadvantages of each category.

Most institutions of higher learning provide residential accommodation to a good proportion of their students and sometimes at reasonable prices. When the institution is not able to offer a suitable place, it usually helps the student to find a suitable alternative place elsewhere. The Student Unions of the institutions also keep a list of landlords and agencies. It is sometimes also wise to go to the university Islamic society as they can also point one in the right direction.

4.1 Types of Accommodation

There are several choices of accommodation available to students and some of them are described below:

a. Halls of Residence

This is a type of accommodation mostly owned and run by institutions or at least controlled by them. It provides each student with a single study bedroom although bathroom and kitchen are shared. Some halls may be self catering but the majority provide meals. Most halls are located close to the institutions and where they are situated far away from the campus then the Student Union may provide bus services on weekdays.

Most institutions prefer to accommodate new students in halls. Life in halls is generally geared towards creating an academic community to which each member is encouraged to contribute in different ways. Living and working together also fosters a spirit of tolerance, understanding and concern for the well being of others, which equip students for their future role in society.

This environment, perhaps together with the facilities often provided like TV rooms, libraries, weight rooms, computer rooms, etc, may greatly enhance academic productivity. Moreover, it is an environment well suited for the development of friendship between contemporaries with a wide variety of interests and points of view.



In halls with board, the fixed catering times may not always be suitable for post graduate and other students needing to spend irregular hours on the campus. There is often a provision for a vegetarian alternative for Muslims and other students with dietary restrictions. With special arrangements, the canteen staff may provide Halal meat. The type and taste of the meals will be considerably different from home food, so new students may find it bland or boring but missing meals would be a waste of money.

In self catering halls, the institutions provide cooking facilities such as cookers, kettle etc but the student provides his/her own cooking utensils (pots, pans, cutlery, etc). Halls with board are generally cheaper than self catering ones and they do certainly remove the chores of cooking and shopping.

Student Unions often run bars at halls. This together with late night parties may create an atmosphere too noisy to bear. One advantage, however, is the immense degree of tolerance you may graduate with.

b. Tenancy/Lease

In this type of accommodation, the institutions rent the property from a private (or public) landlord and then lease it to the students. Bedrooms may be shared in this type of accommodation. Kitchen and cooking facilities may be provided. The student often has a chance of choosing to share the accommodation with smokers or non-smokers and whether or not he/she may be willing to share facilities with students of opposite sex. Rent is usually cheaper than living in halls.

c. Private Sector Housing

Most institutions are not able to offer accommodation to all their students. New students have high priority and you may be lucky to have a university accommodation in your first and may be subsequent years. When this does not happen then the institution's Accommodation Office and the Student Union Office keep lists of recommended landlords and will actively help students in securing accommodation. Due to high competition for privately rented housing it is advisable to plan well in advance. Common types of private sector housing include :

i. Lodgings

This is a type of accommodation in which the student takes a room in someone's home. Meals are usually provided although some may prefer that the tenant does his/her own cooking. The house may be the home of a single person, a couple or a family and the tenant then has to enter into some agreement with the landlord. You may not have the freedom you wish but it does mean you will have a company which could be very helpful especially in your early days.

ii. Flats/Houses

A small group of students may rent a self-contained, furnished flat or house which they could all share. Heating, lighting and water bills are shared among the group.

Before renting a flat or house you will be required to sign a tenancy agreement or a contract. It is advisable that you understand all the terms and conditions of the contract prior to signing it. If you have any doubts seek for advice from your institution's Accommodation Office or the Students Union.

Before taking any accommodation outside the campus it will be wise to consider the following points.

1. The distance from your institution.
2. The safety and security of the property.



3. How reasonable the rent is.

d. Married Students

Most institutions have flats for married couples and students with small families. There is not too much competition for these flats and the rate is mostly fair when compared with private housing. Married students still have the option of taking either the university run flats or renting from a private landlord.

Married students on low grants can be assisted with rent payments from their city or county councils. The rent rebate ranges from part to full payment depending on your income bracket. Only the wife is entitled to apply. However rent rebate is no longer automatic, and some councils have already abolished it. You must check your eligibility to apply as it could effect your right of stay. Other benefits which the students with families may qualify for, include Child benefit and Medical help. Advice on these matters can be sought from the Students' Welfare Officer of the institution.

In most towns in the UK there are areas predominantly occupied by Asian Muslim communities. These areas attract Muslims students because they provide easy access to Masjids, Halal food and Madrasas (Islamiyyah schools) for children.

4.2 Temporary Accommodation

A list of organizations that may help arrange an accommodation for you on your arrival in London is given below. Endeavor to contact them well in advance of your arrival and give all the details you may be able to gather such as flight number, day and time of arrival and how long you require the accommodation for.

1. Muslim Association of Nigerian (MAN) UK

MAN Building
365, Old Kent Road
London SW1 5JH
ENGLAND
(Tel: 0207 231 0100)

2. International Students' House

229 Great Portland Street
London W1N 5HD
ENGLAND
(Tel: 0207-631 8300)

3. The British Council

10, Spring Gardens
London SW1A 2BN
ENGLAND
(Tel: 0207 389 4626)

4. The London Tourist Board

26, Grosvenor Gardens
London SW1W 0DU
ENGLAND
(Tel: 0207 971 0027)



Another type of temporary accommodation is the 'bed and breakfast'. It may be in a family home or a hotel and usually provides sleeping facilities and breakfast.

5. Living in Britain

Living in Britain can be an enjoyable or traumatic experience depending on how one has adjusted. The British environment and culture are different from the ones at home. A little effort is required for adjustment and it is useful to know about the British way of life.

1. The British people are generally more reserved and hardly greet people as you may be used to back in your home country. They take time to get to know about you before interacting with you.
2. Popular social meeting places are usually public houses (pubs), football grounds, race courses, etc. Beware of them especially those that are un-Islamic in nature.
3. Some British people do invite people to their homes for a meal. In this case, you may wish to take a small gift. You can also invite them in return.
4. Punctuality is important for all invitations and appointments. You should telephone in advance if you are coming late or cancelling the appointment.
5. Mixing together of men and women is common. Try to observe Islamic conduct.

5.1 Race Relation Act

The Race Relation Act makes it illegal to discriminate against anyone because of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins. In spite of this, however, racism still exists in the British society overtly or covertly. If you are discriminated against you can take legal action to secure redress. Nevertheless, it is better to inform your Students' Union Welfare Officer. In case of discrimination in work place or gender, the Equal Opportunities Commission can even take legal action on your behalf. Other bodies can offer advice on a range of issues, e.g. Citizen Advice Bureau. However, you are advised to be patient and not let any negative experience discourage you from undertaking your pursuits.

5.2 Laundry and Dry-Cleaning

Public washing and drying facilities may be available in the area where you live. These are coin-operated machines and attendants are available who can assist in either the washing or operating the machines. The attendants also keep coins, in case you need change. Students living in Halls, however, need to have the right coins as these machines are run by the Students Unions and an attendant may not be available. There are many dry cleaners where you can take clothes like coats and suits which can not be machine washed.

5.3 Postal and Telephone Services

These services are more efficient than in our home country. Postal services are available all week except Sundays. You can use first or second class mail by buying the appropriate stamps which are available at Post Offices, shops or stamp machines. Mail can be posted at the Post Office or in the Red Pillar Boxes on the streets which show the collection times on the front. The Post Office offers other services like banking (Girobank), bills payment (telephone, water, gas or electricity), faxing of letters and documents, etc. You can use cash or cheque in payment.



The telephone services are available almost every where. You can use coins which cost a minimum of 30 pence and will last you 15 minutes for any local or national call unfortunately mobile calls are more expensive and will cost you much more. When phoning Nigeria or any other country it is advisable to purchase an international phone card. These can be brought from most shops and come in various denominations. British Telecom amongst others can install a private line in your residence however, payment is made for such services. It is advisable to use cheap rate call which is available between 6:00pm to 6:00am and all day Saturday and Sunday.

5.4 Council Tax

Everyone over the age of 18 years is expected to pay council tax. It is for services provided by the local authority such as the provision of libraries, police services, fire brigade, leisure centers, refuse collection and so forth. Any student who is studying in the UK for six months or longer will be expected to pay council tax at a reduced rate of 20%. You should contact the council tax registration officer within 21 days of your arrival.

Two groups of students will be exempted from council tax: those living in institutionally owned student accommodation, and those living elsewhere who qualify as full time-students and live only with other full-time students. You can obtain further details from your Student Union.

5.5 Safety :- Personal and Property

Crime is on the increase in the UK. Take adequate precautions, lock windows and doors whenever you leave the room or house. Some places are unsafe to go, so avoid them and also avoid walking alone in deserted places or after dark especially females. Some universities operate door-to-door bus service for female students. In some areas street robberies by youths is a major problem if you are approached by a group do not jeopardise your personal safety as many a person has been fatally stabbed doing so. Do not carry large amount of cash with you and take care of your cards, cheque books, documents, etc. You can insure some personal property or deposit important valuables with banks.

If you experience or notice anything that makes you uneasy or poses a security risk then tell someone, e.g., your tutor, a student who has been here longer, or phone the police on 999. It is advisable to join the Neighborhood Watch Scheme in your locality for the purpose of maintaining security and sharing security information. It also offers the opportunity to know the people around you and socialize with them.

5.6 The Police, the Law and the Legal System

You are strongly advised to abide by the laws of the land. Part of the police's job is to assist people and you should not be afraid to ask them for guidance or information. Avoid getting into trouble and beware that the law is strictly applicable to deter recurrence. Should you be arrested, then you have the right to know why you are arrested and also the right to remain silent until you have arranged for a solicitor to help you. Legal aid is available to certain income groups who cannot afford the legal fee charged by solicitors. You are advised to contact the Citizen Advice Bureau.

5.7 Climate and Clothing

The British climate can be very harsh to students coming from a temperate countries especially during the winter. It can be dangerous to your health here and possibly after returning home. Make sure you have appropriate clothes for all types of weather. You therefore need water proof coat, strong shoes, gloves, hats, scarves, an umbrella, etc. Avoid keeping your room too hot as heating, particularly electrical, is very expensive. Summer can be mild or warm but avoid exposure on seeing sudden changes in weather.



5.8 Library Facilities

Library facilities are provided outside the universities and some libraries can be found in your locality. Register with the local library to obtain borrowing cards. Local libraries are useful sources of general information, so do make use of them. Information can be obtained about the facilities on offer.

5.9 Sports and Entertainment

Sporting activities can help to ease pressure from studies and loneliness. There are different sporting facilities available both in the universities and in the community. Find out about the latter from your local library. It is advisable to register with the Islamic Society of your institution or any Islamic organisation nearest to you. They sometimes organize social activities, such as sports, camping holidays, and picnics during Muslim festivals. International societies also organize trips and invite artists from different countries for entertainment.

5.10 Mass Media

Radio and some TV stations operate round the clock. The laws of the society place little restriction on what is said or published. Newspapers are more interested in exposing scandals, politics, romance, etc. You may sometimes get distressed on the hostility towards Islam. Many a times Islam is distorted to divert attention or discourage people from knowing or embracing Islam. Nonetheless, Islam is gradually taking deep root in the West. Many people are accepting Islam majority of who are women. The ratio is more than one to five in favour of women.

Television portrays Africa and other developing countries badly, concentrating on their darker sides such as war, famine, natural calamity, disasters, etc. Some programmes are not good to watch but many are educational especially documentaries. You can glance at newspapers to select such programmes. However, avoid hooking to the TV as this can affect your work. You can respond to some opinions in the newspapers by writing to them. This can help to check misinformation.

5.11 Registration with Local GP

Free health care is available on the National Health Service (NHS) to all overseas students studying for more than six months. This means that you must register with a local doctor (General Practitioner or GP) within a mile radius of where you live. List of doctors are available at local Post Offices. Do not wait until you are ill but register as soon as possible to get National Health Service Card/Number. If you are accompanied by your immediate family, your wife and children will be entitled to free medical treatment but this does not apply to visiting relatives. Prescriptions issued by a doctor incur a charge.

Treatment is free for everyone in the case of accidents and other emergencies via Hospital Casualty Departments. This also applies to communicable diseases and to mental health problems.

5.12 Dentists and Opticians

Students should ask if they can receive free dental treatment on the National Health where the cost of a basic check up is . The student can either pay the private cost, or get free treatment, if possible, from dental students at the Dental Hospital. Students can contact the NHS for an eye test.



Students on low incomes may be able to receive help with prescriptions, dental and optical charges by getting form AG1 from the Department of Social Security, a local dentist, optician or the Post Office. But be careful not to abuse it as this could affect your immigration status.

5.13 International Student Registration

The international societies have centers for overseas students in many parts of the country. Members of the societies are drawn from Universities and Colleges representing countries from all over the world. Each term, there are various programmes of social and cultural activities. These include many national evenings, discussions, films and theatre visits. During September and October there are programmes of activities including orientation courses, visits to places of interest, etc. which provide a good opportunity to see parts of Britain and to meet other students and staff. Visits are also arranged to other countries. The society organizes hospitality schemes to link overseas students with the local people.

5.14 Budgeting

Sometimes one may get into debt. If you budget efficiently you may not worry about debt whilst you are in the UK. Please remember the following:

1. Buy a travel card or season ticket where available. This will greatly reduce your travel costs.
2. Work out a realistic weekly or monthly budget projected through the year which allows for the following:- food, accommodation, laundry and hygiene, books, fuel bills etc.
3. Put your money in a bank or building society. It is advisable to open current account rather than deposit account which attracts interest.
4. Always use your Student Union card and international student card.

5.15 Children's Education : Western and Islamic

Education is a right for all children in Britain. There may be many schools in the locality so find out a suitable school for your children. Try to attend parents' meetings to make sure your child receives good education and also check what the child learns at school as it is not an Islamic society. You have the right to make complaint if you are not satisfied.

Nursery places are hard to find except in some localities. If you have children under schooling age it is advisable for you to inquire about the facilities available for them in your institution.

In recent years, there are increasing number of Islamic schools; some full-time and others part-time. Full-time Islamic Schools are usually organised along the western education patterns except the curriculum. Additional Islamic subjects are taught and the school environment is also Islamic. Girls usually wear Hijab. However, it can be expensive as fees are likely to be paid because they are not grant-aided by the government.

Part-time Islamic schools usually operate in the local mosques and lessons are held in the evenings or at weekends. It is necessary to supplement what the child learns at the school with extra coaching at home.

5.16 Islamic Activities

You can join Islamic societies operating in educational institutions or towns you are residing. Prayer facilities are available in some universities and among the Muslim communities in towns and cities. Some mosques also have study circles.



In addition, there are broad Islamic movements holding vigils at weekends. Make sure you find out which ones are suitable and the ones you can get maximum benefits from. Islamic scholars in particular can provide motivation which can be of immense benefits to inquiring minds ready to learn from their rich experiences in the struggle towards Islamic justice and fairness.

6. Food and Shopping

Budgeting is necessary to avoid financial difficulties and debt trap. British society does not readily give out loans or assist financially as most people keep to themselves. It is cheaper to cook for yourself and always make sure to eat a balanced diet as this would help to keep you warm and healthy. Enquire about retail and wholesale shops. Some shops specialize in continental foods from different parts of the world. Shop around to compare prices and look for special offers. Some supermarkets can be expensive but there are cheaper shops around the street markets.

6.1 Halal Food

Britain is not an Islamic society, so you need to be extra careful about what you eat; from where and from whom? Raw vegetable foods are generally Halal in nature, with the exception of what is fermented whether it be grapes, dates, barley, etc. On the other hand, food of animal origin may be doubtful. Some are made using gelatine and animal fat, which may originate from pig. It is advisable to check the ingredients from which the food is made e.g. bread, cakes, sweets, soups, drinks, etc. The ingredients are displayed on the container (package). For further information, contact some Islamic centers, standard books on fiqh (e.g. the Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qardawi), colleagues and those who have been here for a long time. You may provide your own basic kitchen utensils in self-catering accommodation as some house mates may not be consuming Halal food. Promote healthy eating, by keeping fat, sugar and salt intake as low as possible to prevent serious health risks in later life. Eat plenty of cereals, fish, and vegetables.

6.2 Where to Buy Halal Food

Most corner shops sell Halal foods and majority of the shop owners are Muslims of Asian, African and Middle Eastern origins. It is strongly advisable not to buy meat from the established superstores like Tesco, Aldi, Asda and Sainsburys as they are not halal.

6.3 Where to Buy Your Food

a. Supermarket

Most things you need can be found there. Many items tend to be cheaper than in other places like corner shops. Perishable products (fish, bread, dairy products, etc) are regularly and substantially reduced at the end of the day, especially on Saturdays or when they have reached their 'sell-by' date.

Always keep an eye open for bargains, comparing the prices of the same items across a range of brands. The Supermarket own labeled items are usually a few pence cheaper than their brand name equivalents e.g in Tesco's and Asda. Some Supermarkets have shelves devoted to miscellaneous goods at reduced prices so look out for such offers.

**b. Small/Corner Shops**

These are very handy but expensive because they are often open until late.

c. Open-Air Markets, Stalls and Sunday Markets

These are good value for money because they have few overhead costs. You can also get cheap fruits, vegetables and household goods at affordable prices.

d. Ethnic Shops

These are Chinese, Asian, West Indian or African shops which specialize in specific types of food stuff which may not be obtained in the super stores. They are extremely handy for herbs, exotic spices, fruits and vegetables. Halal food can usefully be obtained from Asian shops within Pakistani communities as well as other sources.

e. Health Food and Body Shops

They are generally very expensive. Their products can be obtained at cheaper prices elsewhere.

f. Clothes shops

It is advisable to shop around when buying clothes/items. There are warehouses (where prices are cheaper compared to superstores) that can sell to retail customers. There are also some second-hand shops e.g. Humana, Oxfam, Salvation Army etc.

7. Study Skills***7.1 Methods of teaching and learning***

There are many methods of teaching and learning used in higher education but much would depend on the nature of your course. The student will experience various forms of learning activities, each of which serves a valuable purpose. Some of these include:

a. Workshop, laboratory or studio sessions

To study a subject with a practical element, some time is spent in workshop, laboratory or studio sessions to develop skills and expertise through practical work, experiments etc. Afterwards you may write up the results.

b. Lectures

Lectures are the most traditional form of teaching. Information is given to a large number of students. Sometimes through electronic media and satellites. Listen carefully and take notes of important points. Most tutors allow time during, or at the end lectures for questions.

**c. Seminars**

Seminars are discussion groups with a tutor and a group of students up to 15--20. Seminars get you more involved, help your personal development and build confidence. Avoid too much disagreement with staff or students. Preparation and reading before hand can be very helpful. Always ask questions whenever you do not understand something as this could enhance your communication skills.

d. Tutorials

These are smaller groups, sometimes just you and your tutor. They will give you an opportunity to discuss work in depth and help to develop more understanding of the subject. Preparation will allow you to get maximum benefit from the tutorial.

e. Small Group Work

Most courses provide opportunities for students to work in small groups on a task assigned by a tutor or chosen by the group. The task can range from a short discussion to a lengthy project and presentation. You learn from each other, develop important social and interpersonal skills, experiencing decision making, problem solving, leadership and working with others. All these skills are valuable in later life.

f. Private study

Private study involves, reading, making notes, researching, writing and revision. Whatever the learning method, you will be encouraged to be responsible for your own learning. Tutors will be ready to assist but you have to decide how much to put into your learning and what method suits you best. Here you are encouraged to be an active and independent learner.

g. E-mail facilities

All universities provide electronic mail facilities to help learning and communication. Information can be shared and exchanged with other mail users. Messages can be sent easily but you need an address for it. However you can install such facility privately provided you have a computer, a telephone line and a modem which connects the computer to the telephone line.

h. Academic Reports

Reports on academic progress is forwarded to sponsoring body if requested.

i. Progress Report

In some institutions students are expected to write progress reports on their work to their supervisors or course tutors on a regular basis. This can determine their academic progress and eventually becomes part of the academic report.



8. Employment Guide

Concerning employment, it is pertinent that one understands his/her status as stated in the visa. One needs to know whether or not he/she could get employed without prior consent of Home Office. Failure to comply with the requirements stated in one's visa may result in that person's deportation or imprisonment.

With the exception of EC (European Community) students and, all others must obtain work permit/clearance from the Home Office or Job Centers before engaging in any form of employment.

8.1 Status in Students Visas

Students not eligible for employment while studying in the UK may have the following inscription in their visas

‘Leave to remain in the UK on condition that the holder does not enter or change employment paid or unpaid without the consent of the secretary of state for employment and does not engage in any business or profession without the consent of the secretary of state for the home department is hereby given.’

In the past, student’s wives and dependents accompanying them to the UK for studies were eligible for employment without seeking approval from the Home Office. However recent occurrences (political, economic, and social) have lead to some dependents being exempted/restricted from engaging in any form of work or employment. These categories may have the following inscriptions in their visas,

‘Leave to remain in the UK on condition that the holder does not engage in employment; paid or unpaid and does not engage in any business or profession, is hereby given.’

8.2 Taking up Employment

As a foreign student, having secured a place for full or part time employment, you should obtain an ‘OSSSI form’ from the Job Centers or Employment Department for completion. The completed form should be taken to the College/University and the employer for endorsement before submitting it to the appropriate authority.

Post graduate students may take up employment or job outside their colleges/universities during their writing-up period or towards the end of their course of study. They are permitted to work in the University/College provided the work does not exceed six hours per week.

8.3 Rules Regarding Employment

1. It is illegal for employers to employ foreign students who have no clearance to work or to engage in employment.
2. It is illegal for any student to seek for job or engage in employment when he /she have restriction in his /her visa.
3. Small and medium firms/employers and entrepreneurs often lure or entice foreign students to take employment because they assume, the students are ignorant of the laws and that students do provide cheap labor to support their academic and living conditions.



4. Some employers/small entrepreneurs do not pay wages to student- workers on training. However, some training on the job /skill acquisition may be acquired free, from employers or on half-wages.
5. Some firms/employers may be engaged in illegal business; check the register of tracks (which gives a list of credible establishments) usually available in some libraries, yellow pages etc.
6. To avoid police harassment and exploitation by some local employers always observe your visa status and seek advice from time to time in appropriate places.

8.4 A Bit about Britain

After Julius Caesar made an exploratory foray in to Britain in 55 BC, the Romans began to expand in to Britain some decades later.

Before the Romans withdrew Jutes, Angles, and Saxons from Denmark and north Germany had begun to raid across the North Sea and invaded as settlers seeking better land.

In the eighth and ninth centuries, Viking warriors from Denmark and Norway plundered the coastal lands from the sea and then they came to settle and farm, conquering most of the east of England and the north east of Scotland. So hence forth the great mixing of peoples had begun.

In 1066 William (duke of Normandy) sailed from France and defeated king Harold of England at the battle of Hastings.

The middle ages is a term used to describe the period between the Norman conquest and the beginning of the Tudor dynasty (1485) when Henry VII came to the throne of England.

Today there are a total of 58.8 million people living in the UK. The largest ethnic minority in Britain are people of Indian descent, they total up to 1.8 % of the British population. Black Africans have a total population of 0.8 %.



Produced by
NIGERIAN MUSLIM FORUM UK
SUITE 102
95 WILTON ROAD
LONDON
SW1V 1BZ
Website: www.nmfuk.org
E-mail: info@nmfuk.org