

Welcome Aboard!

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Arriving in the UK

Congratulations!

You have been successful in obtaining your relevant visa and a teaching opportunity via Rikama Education. This is a handy guide that will assist you in feeling at home when you arrive.

This document is designed to provide you with invaluable information that will assist you with your arrival here in the UK.

Accommodation

Property prices and living costs in Kent are generally cheaper than those in central London. We understand that finding suitable accommodation upon your arrival in our country can be a daunting prospect, however we are here to assist you in finding a cost effective and local housing option.

1. Stay with a relative / friend or book a hotel / hostel / bed & breakfast.
2. Contact estate agents via telephone / email and book viewings.
3. Visit relevant properties.
4. Move in.

The above steps will depend highly on your circumstances prior to your arrival in the UK. Your best & cheapest option will always be to stay with friends or relatives. However, if you do require alternative accommodation such as a hotel, hostel or bed & breakfast for your initial stay, the following websites can bring value:

Hotels

- [Booking](#)
- [Expedia](#)
- [Last Minute](#)
- [Late Rooms](#)
- [Travel Lodge](#)
- [Trivago](#)

Hostels

- www.hostelbookers.com
- www.hostelworld.com
- www.hostelfinder.org.uk
- www.hostels.com
- www.hostelz.com
- www.yha.com

Bed & Breakfast / Rooms

- www.roombuddies.co.uk
- www.airbnb.co.uk
- www.laterooms.com
- www.gumtree.co.uk
- www.booking.com
- www.bedandbreakfasts.co.uk

Flats / Houses

- www.zoopla.co.uk
- www.rightmove.co.uk
- www.your-move.co.uk
- www.primelocation.com

For more in-depth information about renting a property in the UK please refer to the online guide from [Rightmove](#).

Banking

It is highly recommended that you check with your current bank in your home country to see if they have branches or affiliated banks here in the UK.

You may be able to use the same bank account and arrange a ATM card from your home country. If your bank has an affiliated bank in the UK, then you will be able to setup an account from home. You may be required to transfer a sum of money in GBP into your new bank account. You may be charged a small setup fee.

Alternatively, you can apply to open an account with a global bank such as HSBC whom have a global network of branches. The most cost effective way of setting up an account here in the UK is to do so when you arrive.

Please remember when setting up a UK bank account you will be required to provide proof of identity (passport) and address, which normally consists of bringing a utility bill showing your home address. You may also be required to produce previous bank statements and a reference letter from your home bank.

For an up-to-date guide on UK banking please visit [Money Saving Expert](#)

Emergency Services

If you require the emergency services whilst in the UK, you will need to dial **999** from your mobile or landline.

The operator will then give you the option of speaking to the police, the fire brigade or ambulance service, and will then connect you directly to the emergency service you require.

[NHS Direct](#) is a medical helpline for non-life threatening medical emergencies. Dial **111** for this service.

For non-emergency assistance from the police, you should call **101**. This is for crimes that are not an emergency but require immediate police attention. For example, if your car is stolen.

Getting Around

Common travel links in the UK are trains, buses & tubes in central London.

The UK has a developed and reliable means of transport depending on where you decide to work. Many overseas teachers do not purchase a car in this country so it is important that you understand the UK travel network & that you will be able to commute to your place of work and places of interest with ease.

Teachers seeking work in rural areas may find a car delivers more flexibility and freedom due to more limited transport links.

For information on Trains visit [National Rail](#)

For information on Buses visit [Bus Routes & Maps](#)

For information on Tubes visit [Transport For London](#)

If you are thinking of buying a car the following websites may be useful:

- [Auto Trader](#)
- [Ebay](#)
- [Gumtree](#)

Living in Kent

Rikama Education is based in Kent, and most of our placements are situated within Kent and its surrounding areas. We believe working in Kent is a fantastic option as it borders London, is an area of outstanding beauty and is commonly known as The Garden of England.

Property prices and living costs are generally cheaper than those in central London.

Kent is one of the largest counties in the UK, and has over 600 schools. There are always many options within the larger towns and smaller, more rural villages that may suit teaching professionals who prefer the countryside.

The following website has more information on Kent: [Visit Kent](#)

Kent borders London and has fantastic transport links for those who like history, architecture and night life!

The following website has more information on London: [Visit London](#)

Mobile Phone

We highly recommend that you unlock your mobile phone in your country of origin prior to your arrival. You will then be able to install a UK sim card and use your phone immediately.

If your mobile phone has not been unlocked your existing mobile phone provider will be able to provide this service for you.

Here in the UK you have a choice between contract & Pay-As-You-Go options. The best value for money is quite often Sim-Only plans. These are generally available on monthly contracts and come with packages for minutes, texts and data.

The main network providers here in the UK are:

- [3 Mobile](#)
- [EE](#)
- [GiffGaff](#)
- [O2](#)
- [Virgin Mobile](#)
- [Vodafone](#)

Mobile telephone tariffs can be checked on each of the networks respective websites above.

National Insurance (NI) Numbers

You may be required to obtain a NI number whilst working in the UK. How you pay depends on whether you're employed or self-employed.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Term Dates

All schools in the UK are separated by 3 terms in each academic year:

- Autumn Term (September – December)
- Spring Term (December – April)
- Summer Term (April – July).

Every term is divided into 2, with a 1 week break in the middle, which is known as Half Term.

Christmas holidays are normally 2 weeks long and run from a few days before Christmas, into the new year normally between the 2nd and the 5th of January.

Easter holidays normally run for 2 weeks and like most countries we have several bank holidays throughout the year.

Umbrella Companies

Most international teachers work via an umbrella company. Working through an umbrella company means that you become their employee and they will be responsible for your pay and tax contributions. Rikama Education will pay the umbrella company weekly and in turn they will pay you, after deducting your tax and NI if applicable.

They will pay you a net salary into your personal bank account, also on a weekly basis.

We have several reputable umbrella companies that we work with and can advise on options including the most efficient and cost effective solutions for yourself, depending on your personal circumstances.

Utilities

When moving into your new accommodation it is important to be aware of the utility bills that you are likely to be responsible for. This includes:

- Council Tax
- Water
- Electricity
- Gas
- Home Contents Insurance

All homes in the UK will have water, electricity and / or gas as standard. However, there are many energy providers, so once again it is advisable once settled to look at a comparison website such as:

- [You Switch](#)
- [Money Saving Expert](#)
- [Money Supermarket](#)
- [Compare The Market](#)

When renting it is recommended that you insure household items with contents insurance. This insures them in the event of fire, theft and damage. Insurance is also a very competitive area and we recommend you look for the best deals via price comparison websites such as:

- [Confused](#)
- [Money Supermarket](#)
- [Compare The Market](#)
- [Go Compare](#)