



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Exchange Factsheet

Academic Year 2026-2027

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A. Contact Information

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UK Police 24/7 Emergency Line: +1 859 257 8573

International SOS (UK's health insurance provider): +1 215 942 8226

Important Websites

Main UK Website: <http://www.uky.edu/UKHome/>

UK International Center Website: <http://www.uky.edu/international/>

Education Abroad (EA) Website: <http://international.uky.edu/ea>

Incoming Exchange Students Homepage:

<http://international.uky.edu/ea/incoming-exchanges-uk>

Health Insurance Requirements for International Students:

<https://international.uky.edu/iss/health-coverage>

Virtual Tour of the UK Campus: <https://www.youvisit.com/uky>

B. Important Dates

Fall 2026

Required Arrival Date: August 16, 2026

Students must arrive in Lexington on this date to participate in all required pre-semester activities.

Mandatory Orientation Program: August 17-21, 2026

This includes the international student orientation and the separate exchange-specific orientation.

Classes Begin: August 24, 2026

Final Day of Fall Semester: December 17, 2026

Spring 2027

Required Arrival Date: January 5, 2027

Students must arrive in Lexington on this date to participate in all required pre-semester activities.

Mandatory Orientation Program: January 6-8, 2027

This includes the international student orientation and the separate exchange-specific orientation.

Classes Begin: January 11, 2027

Final Day of Spring Semester: May 7, 2027

UK Academic Calendar

<https://registrar.uky.edu/academic-calendars/university>

C. Eligibility, Nomination & Application Process

i) English Language Proficiency Requirement

For Undergraduate Students

To enroll in undergraduate coursework at UK, students must meet one of the following minimum scores:

- **TOEFL ITP:** 527 (197 CBT, 71 iBT) or **IELTS:** 6.0
Applicable for: Arts & Sciences, Communication, Design, Education, Fine Arts, Agriculture, Engineering
- **TOEFL ITP:** 550 (213 CBT, 79 iBT) or **IELTS:** 6.5
Required for: Gatton College of Business & Economics

Additional accepted tests:

- **TOEFL iBT Special Home Edition** (same score requirements as above)
- **TOEFL iBT MyBest Score** (accepted)
- **Duolingo English Test:** 105 or higher
- **B2 First or C1 Advanced:** minimum score 173
- **C2 Proficiency:** minimum score 180

For Graduate Students

Minimum requirements:

- **TOEFL iBT:** 79 or **IELTS:** 6.5
- **Duolingo English Test:** 115 or higher

All test scores must be less than two years old at the time of application.

ii) Other Eligibility Requirements

UK does **not** specify a minimum GPA requirement.

However, students must:

- Meet the English language proficiency requirement
- Have completed **at least 2 semesters** of university study at time of participation
- Be in **good academic standing** at their home institution

Graduate-level exchange students who plan to take graduate coursework at UK must also submit an application to the **UK Graduate School**.

The UK Exchanges Coordinator will provide instructions for completing this process.

iii) Nominating Your Students

Nominate your students to the UK Exchange using the online nomination form

<https://international.uky.edu/form/exchange-student-nomination#no-back>

Please complete all sections as fully as possible.

Nominations for students wanting to take courses offered by the

UK Gatton College of Business & Economics

UK College of Engineering

UK College of Communication & Information

must be accompanied by an email to the UK Exchanges Coordinator listing the title and code for the specific UK courses desired, and a scanned pdf copy of the student's most recent home institution transcript demonstrating the completion of any necessary pre-requisite courses.

The transcript and UK course list are required to determine the student's eligibility for the desired UK courses.

Once the nomination is approved, the UK Exchanges Coordinator will email the student and their home institution Exchanges Coordinator with the link to the online UK exchange application, requesting they start the application process.

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Nomination Deadline:

- Nomination deadline for fall/academic year participation: March 23
- Nomination deadline for spring participation: September 10

Please nominate your students as early as possible to give them more time to apply for accommodation and their student visa after they've been officially admitted to UK.

Once UK approves your nomination, the UK Exchanges Coordinator will email you and the student with:

- Instructions on beginning their online application
- A factsheet to guide them through the process

iv) The Online UK Exchange Application

Your student must complete all required items before their application can be reviewed.

Required materials include:

- Color scan of their passport photo page
- Official home institution transcript*
- Proof of English proficiency
- UK J-1 Exchange Student Application Form^
- List of courses they want to take at UK

[^] The J-1 form is included in the online application portal.

* If their transcript is not in English, an official translation **must** be provided. UK will **not** review self-translated documents.

v) Application Deadline

- Fall or Academic Year: **April 15**
- Spring: **October 1**

Please encourage your students to submit their application as early as possible—there is **no benefit** to waiting until deadline day.

vi) Admission Letter

Once the exchange application has been approved, UK Admissions will issue the **official decision letter** online.

Hard copies are **not** mailed.

The student will also receive an email titled "**Next Steps to Becoming a Wildcat**", which covers:

- Activating their UK email account
- Requesting their DS-2019
- Applying for housing
- Health requirements and health insurance
- SEVIS fee payment
- Airport pick-up request information

Students should not access this page or attempt to complete any of the requirements until AFTER they have received their admissions letter from UK.

vii) Proof of Funds and the DS-2019

After receiving the decision letter, the student will be instructed to request their **DS-2019** by submitting their **proof of funds** through the **ISSS iCAT portal**.

A DS-2019 is required to apply for their J-1 student visa.

Proof of Funds Requirements

They must show financial documentation demonstrating a minimum of:

- **US \$9,661 per semester**, or
- **US \$19,322 for the full academic year**

Acceptable documentation includes:

- Bank statements

- Official financial guarantee letters
- Other certified financial documents*

* Documents not in English must be accompanied by an official English translation. Self-translated documents are **not accepted**.

Once approved, their DS-2019 will be emailed to them as a PDF.

Proof of Funds Requirements for Academic Year 2026-27

- Tuition, mandatory fees, course fees: **Included in exchange benefits**
- Accommodation, Meal Plan, Books & Supplies: **\$16,200**
- Health Insurance: **\$3,321***
 - \$1,260 for fall
 - \$2,061 for spring

Total required per semester: \$9,661

Total required per academic year: \$19,322

**this amount may increase for AY 26-27*

D. Available Areas of Study at UK

i) Can students take coursework in any college?

If they are participating in a **university-wide exchange**, they can take coursework across a variety of colleges at UK.

If they are participating on a **college-specific exchange**, they are expected to take the majority of their classes in the college that owns the exchange.

Example: If your exchange agreement is with the **Gatton College of Business & Economics**, they must take most of their coursework in this college.

ii) Areas of Study Requiring College Approval

The following UK colleges require **specific academic prerequisites** and **selective admission**:

- **College of Engineering** (biosystems, chemical, civil, computer science, electrical, mechanical, mining)

- **Gatton College of Business & Economics** (accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing)
- **College of Communication & Information**
(Communication, Integrated Strategic Communication, Digital Media, Journalism, ICT, Media Arts & Studies)

If your student requests courses in these colleges:

- They must demonstrate they have completed the **necessary prerequisite courses** at their home institution.
- Additional documentation may be required before eligibility can be confirmed.

iii) Courses Not Open to Exchange Students

- Undergraduate exchange students **cannot** enroll in courses numbered **500, 600, 700, or 800**.

These are graduate-level courses.

iv) Colleges with restrictions

Some colleges have limited or no availability for exchange students:

- **College of Design:**
Architecture courses are **not open** to exchange students.
- **College of Education:**
Courses with prefixes **EDC, EDL, EDS** are **not open** to exchange students.
- **College of Health Sciences:**
Courses offered in this college are **not open** to exchange students.
- **College of Public Health:**
Courses in this college are **not open** to exchange students.

v) Colleges closed to exchange students

The following **graduate and professional colleges** do **not** permit exchange student enrollment:

- College of Dentistry
- College of Law
- College of Medicine
- College of Nursing

vi) UK online courses

- UK **Distance Learning** and **fully online** courses are **not included** in exchange tuition benefits.
- Students must enroll in the required **minimum number of in-person credits**:
 - Undergraduates: **12 credits**
 - Graduates: **9 credits**

If they choose to take a UK distance learning or online course:

- It must be **in addition** to their minimum in-person credits.
- They will be responsible for paying **all tuition and fees** for the online class.

vii) UK Course Catalog

Use the UK Registrar's Course Descriptions pages to explore classes offered at UK:

- **Undergraduate courses:**
<http://catalogs.uky.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=780>
- **Graduate courses:**
<http://catalogs.uky.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=851>

Notes:

- Course offerings for a given semester are generally confirmed **2–3 months** before the semester begins.
- Not all catalog courses are offered every term, so students should identify **alternative course options**.

viii) Registering for Courses

After the student receives their official UK admission and DS-2019:

1. The UK Exchanges Coordinator will introduce them to their **UK academic advisor**.
2. This advisor will help finalize their course selections.
3. They may be enrolled in **up to 3 courses prior to arrival**, depending on availability and college policy.
4. Some colleges (e.g., **Engineering**) do **not** enroll exchange students until after arrival.

Remaining courses are added during **orientation week**.

Flexibility in course selection is strongly encouraged.

ix) Minimum & Maximum Credits Per Semester

Undergraduate Students

- **Minimum required:** 12 in-person credits
- **Maximum:** 18 credits
- Most courses = 3 credits → typical load = **4 classes**

Graduate Students

- **Minimum required:** 9 in-person credits
- Most courses = 3 credits → typical load = **3 classes**

1 UK credit = 15 classroom hours.

E. Costs Covered by the Exchange Agreement

i) UK Tuition, Mandatory Fees, and Individual Course Fees

An exchange student:

- **Pays tuition and mandatory fees to their home institution**, *not* to the University of Kentucky.
- **Is not responsible** for UK tuition, mandatory fees, or individual course fees (except for distance learning/online courses — see Section D.vi).

These fees **will still appear** on their UK student account.

The UK Education Abroad & Exchanges office will pay them **after the add/drop deadline** each semester.

All of this will be explained in detail at the **New International Exchange Student Orientation** after arrival at UK.

ii) UK Costs Not Included in Exchange Benefits

The following fees are **not** covered by the exchange agreement and will be charged to their UK student account:

- UK accommodation
- UK meal plan
- UK international student health insurance
- Early move-in fee: **\$31 per night**
- Break housing fee: **\$103**
- UK International Center fee: **\$125 per semester**
- See Blue U orientation fee: **\$25**
- New Student Program fee: **\$46**
- UK Wildcat ID card: **\$20**

Note:

The **\$50 UKEA application fee is waived** for students attending UK on exchange.

iii) The Estimated Cost of Participation for One Semester

The following estimates reflect typical semester expenses for exchange students.

On-Campus Accommodation

- Undergraduate: **\$4,379 – \$6,198** per semester
- Graduate: **\$679 – \$1,372 per month**

Meal Plan (required for undergraduates living on campus)

- **\$2,045 – \$3,042** per semester

Other Estimated Costs

- Books & Supplies: **\$425**
- UK International Student Health Insurance:
 - **\$1,260** (Fall)*
 - **\$2,061** (Spring)*
- UK International Center Fee: **\$125**
- Personal Spending Money (minimum suggested): **\$450**

To estimate costs for a full academic year: Multiply semester totals by **2**.

**these amounts may increase for AY 26-27*

F. Accommodation & Meal Plan

i) On-Campus Housing

The University of Kentucky offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate on-campus housing options.

- Undergraduate housing:
<http://www.uky.edu/housing/undergraduate/places-to-live>

Undergraduate exchange students *may* apply for any residence hall; however, many halls **close during major university breaks** (Thanksgiving, Christmas/New Year, Spring Break).

Students in these halls must move out and arrange their own accommodation at personal cost.

Residence Halls information: <http://www.uky.edu/housing/residence-halls>

- Housing rates: <http://www.uky.edu/housing/rates>

Additional Fees:

- Break Housing Fee: **\$103**
- Early Move-In Fee (required for exchange students attending pre-semester orientation): **\$31 per night**
- Graduate housing:
<https://wildcatliving.uky.edu/graduate-and-family-housing/communities>

On-campus graduate housing is extremely limited and graduate students must be prepared to find their own off-campus accommodation (see 'Off-campus Housing' below).

ii) Housing Application

UK's **On-Campus Housing Application is separate** from the UKEA Exchange Application.

Students can apply for housing **only after** they receive their official **Decision Letter** admitting them to UK.

Application links:

- Undergraduate Housing Application: <https://wildcatliving.uky.edu/apply>

- Undergraduate housing rates: <https://wildcatliving.uky.edu/residence-halls/rates>
- Graduate Housing Application & rates:
<https://wildcatliving.uky.edu/graduate-and-family-housing>

Important:

- Students are responsible for submitting their own housing application.
- They should apply **immediately** after receiving their acceptance letter.
- UK **does not guarantee housing** if they apply late.

iii) Off-Campus Housing

Students can arrange their own off-campus housing. If they choose this option:

- They are fully responsible for finding accommodation, signing a lease, and paying rent.
- The UK Education Abroad office **does not** arrange or recommend off-campus housing.

We recommend this website for off-campus accommodation:

<https://www.lexingtonoffcampus.com/>

iv) Meal Plan

Undergraduate students living on campus are **required** to enroll in a meal plan when completing the housing application.

- The least expensive plan is the **Weekly 10**.
- Unlimited meal plans are also available.

Meal plan details:

https://uky.campusdish.com/MealPlans/Category?cat=Fall_2021_Meal_Plans_6975&lid=6975

Additional notes:

- All students (with or without a meal plan) may eat at UK dining facilities.
- Average cost of a meal is approximately **\$12**.
- Numerous fast-food and quick-service options are located near campus.

Graduate students living on campus **are not required** to purchase a meal plan.

G. Health Insurance

i) Health Insurance Requirements

All international exchange students must carry health insurance that meets the requirements of the **U.S. Affordable Care Act (ACA)**.

To ensure compliance:

- Students are **automatically enrolled** in the **University of Kentucky Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)** once they enroll in classes.
- They do **not** need to submit any enrollment forms.

Cost for the academic year: \$3,321*

- Fall semester: **\$1,260**
- Spring semester: **\$2,061**
(*these amounts may change for AY 26-27)

Policy details: <https://international.uky.edu/isss/health-coverage>

Coverage periods:

- **Fall:** August 15 – December 31
- **Spring:** January 1 – August 14

ii) Health Insurance Waiver

In certain cases, an exchange student may request a **Health Insurance Waiver** if they believe their personal insurance policy already meets ACA requirements.

Important notes:

- Waivers can only be submitted **after arrival** at UK.
- If the waiver is **approved**, they will not be charged for SHIP.
- If the waiver is **denied**, they must purchase SHIP.

Waiver requirements and instructions:

<https://international.uky.edu/isss/health-coverage>

Important:

- Most foreign insurance plans **do not** meet ACA standards.
- UK Education Abroad & Exchanges **cannot** review or approve insurance plans.
- **Travel insurance is not accepted** as adequate coverage.

iii) Immunizations & Vaccinations

Students may need to update certain immunizations **before** traveling to the University of Kentucky.

After arrival, they will complete:

- A health information form
- An immunization record

Information:

<https://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/university-health-service/student-health/vaccinations>

Tuberculosis (TB) Screening:

All new international students must complete TB screening after arrival.

Some required immunizations and x-rays may **not** be covered by many insurance policies.

Details: <http://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/uhs/student-health/international/>

Do NOT send immunization documents before arrival.

Students should bring their records with them and provide them only if asked.

Reminder:

The UK Exchanges Coordinator is **not a medical professional** and cannot advise students on which immunizations they may need before traveling to the U.S.

H. Preparing to Arrive at UK

In the months and weeks leading up to their arrival, the **UK Exchanges Coordinator** will send students several important emails. These messages will include information about:

- Their required arrival date
- Airport pick-up options
- Residence hall check-in
- Understanding their UK student bill
- Final reminders and pre-arrival steps

Students are **expected to read all of these emails carefully.**

Arrival Requirements

They must arrive on campus **on the date specified** by the UK Education Abroad & Exchanges Coordinator.

After arrival, they will participate in **mandatory pre-semester orientations**, which include:

1. **International Student Orientation** (for all new international students)
2. **International Exchange Student Orientation** (conducted by the UK Exchanges Coordinator)
3. **Big Blue Nation Orientation** (for all new students)

Attendance at all orientations is mandatory.

Important Arrival Notes

- If a student arrives in Lexington **before** the official arrival date, they must arrange their own **off-campus accommodation** (such as a hotel).
- They **cannot** move into their on-campus housing early.
- Early Move-In is only available on the designated dates associated with exchange student orientation and incurs a nightly fee.