



Opening a UK Bank Account

It is important that you open a bank account as soon as possible to ensure that your money is kept safely.

The Pound (£) is the central unit of currency in the UK. £1 (one pound) is divided into 100 pence; the coins in use are 1p, 2p, 5p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2. The notes in use are £5, £10, £20 and £50.

You can find a useful currency converter tool on this website: [OANDA.com](https://www.oanda.com)

Usual branch opening hours are from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, although bigger branches may open outside these hours. Many banks also offer customer services phone numbers outside these times as well. The main high street banks - NatWest, Barclays, Lloyds TSB, Royal Bank of Scotland, HSBC and Halifax - all have branches in Liverpool city centre.

Which Bank should I choose?

There are a number of factors you should consider when choosing, and opening, a bank account or building society account as an international student in the UK.

The International Advice Team is unable to advise you on which account or which bank should choose. For further information please See the British Bankers' Association information - ['International students: Opening a UK bank account': 'International students: Opening a UK bank account'](#).

Types of Account Available

Most banks offer customers the option to open a 'basic bank account'. A 'basic bank account' is different to a standard 'current account'. It offers limited facilities, is usually fee-free, and allows you to receive money and pay bills but does not allow you to have an 'overdraft' facility. A large number of banks will also offer an account specifically designed for international students. This will often be like a basic bank account. However, it may also offer limited overdraft facilities.

Proving your identity and immigration status

Banks and building societies must make a status check on all new applicants for a current account. They must not open a current account for a person who requires immigration permission to be in the UK but who does not have it (that means, someone who is in the UK as an overstayer).

Sharia Banking

Some banks offer accounts and services that meet Sharia principles, also known as Sharia-compliant accounts. There are also a few specialist banks that operate in accordance with Sharia principles. Please see more information here:

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/articles/sharia-compliant-savings>

Documentation you will need to open your account

You will need to provide documentation in order to open your account, such as:

- Identification (ID) in the form of a passport and visa/BRP
- Verification of your UK address such as a signed Tenancy agreement
- Evidence of your student status: you can get this letter by going to [MyLJMU](#) and clicking on My Services and then Letter Request*

**You can do this a maximum of three times. A letter will be generated instantly for you. Please check with your bank what documentation they will need to open your account.*

Useful Information

Most banks are currently opening accounts through their online banking website/apps. Please check before travelling to a branch. When you first open your bank account, they may ask you where your funds will be coming from. Your bank may also charge for accepting payments from abroad.

Please note:

- If you change your address it is important that you inform the bank as soon as possible
- Due to the pandemic most UK bank branches continue to operate on a limited service in order to ensure the safety of their customers and staff. Subsequently most banks cannot offer account opening services through a branch.
- Students should only go to a branch once advised to do so
- Students coming from overseas must only visit a branch once any 'quarantine/self-isolation period' has expired and NOT before
- Once advised to visit a branch students will probably need to book an appointment to complete the account opening process
- Overseas students will be required to present a valid passport, Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) and a Proof of Student Status Letter from the University, available in My LJMU
- UK banks expect all customers to wear face masks (unless exempt). Customers will only be seen individually and are advised to attend the branch on their own