

Opening a UK bank account

A guide for international students - studying for less than 1 year

Opening a bank account in the UK is the safest and most effective way of managing your money during your studies. This guide gives an overview of what to consider when choosing your account and the documents you will need to be able to provide in order to open one.

Check our webpages for more information www.sussex.ac.uk/internationalsupport/money

What type of account can I open?

This will depend on the length of your course in the UK, as well as how you intend to use the account, as some accounts have restrictions or fees. It is important to understand any potential charges and the various features of the accounts. Do check our webpages where we provide details on bank accounts that are popular with students: www.sussex.ac.uk/internationalsupport/money

- **If you are studying in the UK for less than 1 year** you there are fewer accounts available to you: A new alternative is the **app-based bank Monzo**, which offers all the same services no matter the length of your stay in the UK. **Santander** offers students studying for less than a year their '**Essentials Current Account**' or a '**Basic Account**' **depending on the length of your course**. You may have to apply for these accounts in branch and for the 'Essentials Current Account' there is a fee of £1 per month. Another option is **Metro Bank's 'Cash Account'** however this comes with restrictions in how you can use it and requires that you have **at least 6 months remaining on your visa**.
- **If you want to set up payment plans** for your university fees, smartphone contract, or online subscriptions such as Netflix and Spotify please check the features of your chosen bank account. For example, Metrobank's 'Cash Account' and Santander's 'Essentials Current Account' don't allow pre-authorised payments. Monzo does allow payment plans.
- **If you want to send or receive international transfers**, please check with the bank you choose as many banks charge a fee for international transfers. Monzo require you to go through TransferWise for international transfers.
- **If you want to open an account quickly**, you should plan ahead. Many banks have an online application that needs to be completed before making an appointment, so check with the bank you choose.
- **App-based Banking** is becoming a popular option, App-based Banks such as Monzo offer current accounts which you can open up through their app.



Please see the opposite side of this guide for useful tips and what documents you will need to open a bank account.

Useful tips for opening a bank account:

1. **Most banks will ask you for a 'Letter of Introduction for UK Banking Facilities'**. You can request this letter once you have started the Online Registration process and included a term-time address with your personal details. You can request the bank letter from our 'Request a Bank Letter' page on the International Student Support website <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internationalsupport/money>
2. **Open a UK bank account through App-based Banking!** With Monzo, Starling and Revolut, you can open a bank account through the app available on Android and iOS; no visits to a bank are necessary. You can receive instant spending notifications as well as use the in-app budgeting tool. Monzo will post your bank card to your UK address in approximately 3 working days.

Which documents will I need to show?

To open a bank account in the UK you will normally be required to provide documentary evidence of both your identity and your UK and overseas addresses. Specific documents required may vary between banks:

Bank	Documents
Monzo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof of identity: passport (with valid visa if applicable) OR Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) OR EU national identity card - you will need to take a picture of your ID through the Monzo app• 'Selfie Video' to confirm your identity• University letter with your term-time address (request online from International Student Support) OR proof of your UK address
Santander	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof of identity: passport (with valid visa if applicable) OR Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) OR EU national identity card• University of Sussex student ID card OR a University letter needed to open a UK bank account (request online from International Student Support)
Metro Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proof of identity: passport (with valid visa if applicable) OR Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) OR EU national identity card• University letter needed to open a UK bank account (request online from International Student Support)

For more information:

Monzo - <https://monzo.com/>

Santander - <https://www.santander.co.uk/uk/current-accounts/essentials-current-account>

Santander - <https://www.santander.co.uk/personal/current-accounts/basic-current-account>

Metro Bank - <https://www.metrobankonline.co.uk/bank-accounts/products/current-account/cash-account/>

Other options you may want to consider are:

Bank of China - <http://www.bankofchina.com/uk/>

Revolut - <https://blog.revolut.com/>

Starling Bank - <https://www.starlingbank.com/>

The following banks have been excluded from the list above as they don't offer bank accounts for students studying for less than 1 year: Barclays, Lloyds Bank, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), HSBC, NatWest.