

## Working in the UK after study – Information for international students

Study in the UK provides an excellent opportunity to boost your insight into new cultures, ways of thinking and work practices and to really develop your English language skills. It can also provide access to UK work experience and opportunities, with the flexibility for international students at Manchester to obtain part-time work, internships and experience during study remaining unchanged.

### Recruiting international students – work visas changes for non-European Economic Area students

The UK Border Agency has announced the closure of the Post Study Work Visa in April 2012. This however will also be accompanied by the relaxing of requirements for an alternative visa route - the Tier-2 employer sponsored work visa. This will allow continued opportunities for international students to gain graduate level employment in the UK under this visa. The **concessions** announced by the UK Border Agency are that:

- There will **not** be a limit on the numbers of students able to switch from student visa to Tier 2 (students switching to Tier 2 will not affect a company's visa quotas)
- Employers sponsoring switching students will not be required to meet the Resident Labour Market Test - the need to demonstrate that they could not recruit a UK or EEA national for the job. (Although other requirements for the visa will still apply such as minimum salary levels)(1)

(1) Please note that the specific guidelines are yet to be confirmed by the UK Border Agency

### Work visa changes - how will I be affected?

Given what has been announced so far, the following insights into the changes can be provided:

- **The Tier 2 route** has always been used by UK graduate employers, alongside the post-study work visa and has some perceived advantages over the latter for a number of graduate employers - as this visa is specific to the role / employer and not transferable. It also currently counts towards a route to settlement in the UK. It is anticipated that more graduate employers will now utilise this route and the concessions.
- In the past the main barrier to more graduate employers using Tier-2 has been the need to pass the **resident labour market test**. The announcement of a concession around this requirement for graduating international students will be an asset to graduate employers who are on the Sponsor Register and therefore able to use the Tier-2 route. There are currently around 20,000 employers on the register in the UK and it is possible see a listing on the UK Border Agency website, enabling students to target their applications to these firms. It is also possible for firms to get onto the register.
- Another barrier to recruiters in 2010 was the new **cap**, or limit, on numbers of tier 2 visas that UK employers faced. Again, the UK Government has announced that graduating international students transferring to tier 2 will experience a concession and be outside of the caps and numbers will not be limited. To take advantage of this concession, international students will have to find a graduate job offer with a sponsoring employer **before** their student visa expires. Although graduate employers hire all year round, some popular graduate programmes have a long recruitment cycle, so students will

need to begin their graduate job hunting early in the final year of study if they are to maximise their chances of success with particular firms.

- International students – as with all students, do however, need to pay attention to how UK graduate employers recruit, and in particular the **skills and qualities** sought on applications to ensure they are in a position to apply early. They also need to focus upon ensuring **their language ability** is proficient for job applications and selection processes with employers.
- The Tier-2 visa currently also requires a minimum salary of **£20,000** for the position. This may reinforce the need for international students to ensure that they have a range of employability skills on offer, and apply early in order to secure a position that pays this salary. The average graduate starting salary for Manchester graduates is around £20,000 ([www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk)), but please also see the section – “what about my chosen career area?” for more details about typical starting salaries and routes into employment for specific job roles.

### **How can The University of Manchester help? - Are there any employment guarantees?**

Students at The University of Manchester are given an extensive range of support and opportunities to build their employability skills and support to market themselves during the job hunting process too.

Almost 80% of students rate the Careers Service as good or excellent at Manchester (1). In 2010 the University of Manchester was chosen as the most targeted university by the UK’s “Top 100 Graduate Employers” (2) and in the 2010 QS World University Rankings, The University scored equal top first across the globe for “Employer Reputation” scoring 100 / 100 for the quality of its graduates (3). With over 400 graduate employers recruiting on the Manchester campus each year and many hundreds more advertising jobs with us, these surveys reinforce The University’s reputation for producing outstanding and popular graduates.

“For more insight into the excellent services available at The University of Manchester please see the Careers Service website”.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students)

Some of our **most popular services and resources** available include:

#### **All students:**

- Part-time jobs, internships and work experience opportunities emailed to your desktop. In 2009/10 over 1000 work placement and over 600 part-time job adverts were circulated by the Careers Service. [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/jobsearch/workexperience/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/jobsearch/workexperience/)
- Over 200 mentoring partnerships are available each year linking students with representatives of companies and Manchester alumni. Mentors come from organisations including Goldman Sachs, Rolls Royce, HSBC, IBM and the programme includes almost 100 mentors in China and India too. [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/employable/mentoring/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/employable/mentoring/)
- Excellent support for job hunting – including personal feedback on job applications and CVs; practice interview training, testing and workshop training for selection centres. Many sessions involve input from and direct contact with, UK employers. [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/applicationsinterviews/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/applicationsinterviews/)

**International students:**

- A programme of over 30 **specialist workshops** for international students including “**International Students Careers Week**” in November, and a range of visiting recruiters and trainers.  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/internationalweek](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/internationalweek)
- Dedicated **websites and news updates** targeted for international students  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/international](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/international) - including the weekly **Careers Blog** for international students at: [www.manchesterinternationalcareers.wordpress.com](http://www.manchesterinternationalcareers.wordpress.com)
- **International Talent** – an initiative circulating work experience opportunities with local firms to students with language skills or international experience –  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/internationaltalent](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/internationaltalent)
- Manchester has launched international networks including the innovative **India Manchester Graduate Network** putting Indian students in touch with Indian alumni around the globe, recruiters and each other – [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/indianetwork](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/indianetwork)

**For undergraduate students:**

- **Career Management Skills** courses - providing students on particular degree programmes with an excellent insight and proficiency in the graduate job market and employability skills. Some also offer project based work experience. [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/employable/modules/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/employable/modules/)
- **The Manchester Leadership Programme** – a unique combination of academic study and volunteering - developing a practical and theoretical understanding of leadership. [www.mlp.manchester.ac.uk/](http://www.mlp.manchester.ac.uk/)

**For postgraduate students:**

- A range of specialist programmes are available across schools including the specialist masters programmes’ **careers liaison team** at Manchester Business School. For more details please contact the relevant Academic School.

For a comprehensive guide to what else is available, please check out **The Manchester Careers Guide online** at: [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/downloads/publications/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/downloads/publications/)

The Careers Service at Manchester is also working closely with recruiters on how to use work visas. This includes offering free immigration advice to graduate employers and students at its graduate job fairs, and also offering free seminars to local employers.

However, being at an excellent University and having a great Careers Service can only help you if you get involved and make the most of what is on offer. As so much of the job hunting process depends upon you, it is impossible to provide employment guarantees.

(1) The UK Graduate Career Survey – 2010

(2) High Fliers Survey – 2010

(3) The QS World University Rankings 2010

**How are UK employers responding to the changes?**

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This information is produced in good faith and is correct at the time of publication. For additional queries specific to your degree specialism or regarding profession qualifications please contact the Admissions team within the relevant Academic School – [www.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.manchester.ac.uk)

UK graduate employers work hard to attract the best candidates for their jobs and take a positive approach to hiring international talent recognising their multicultural exposure, cultural adaptability and language ability, as key employability considerations. Approximately one third of graduate recruiters at Manchester were Tier 2 visa sponsors in previous years to the cap, even with the labour market test. (1) It is now likely that other UK recruiters on the sponsor register will be able to hire international students using tier 2 visas more easily.

However, as the details of the visa concessions are still to be released, there is little information available to recruiters, and less about employers' anticipated responses. Students will find only information reflecting current work visa regulations on employers' websites until the changes are implemented.

(1) Based upon a survey of recruiters at the Graduate Fairs at The University of Manchester in 2008- 2009.

### **How can I maximise my chances of success?**

Across the globe, employers hire graduate talent in different ways. Many graduate employers increasingly seek a range of qualities in applicants including evidence of skills and experience beyond academic ability and study specialism. In the UK, graduate employers typically look for a range of skills and qualities when hiring that include:

- A strong academic record (although not necessarily a specific degree specialism)
- Evidence of **employability skills** such as team working, leadership, drive, commercial awareness and problem solving
- **Career motivation** - a passion for & insight into the job you are applying for.
- The ability to market what you have to offer to the employer during the selection process (application / interview) . This demands **excellent communication skills** (including English proficiency)

In the UK employers expect students to apply to their firms directly so they can explore their career motivation – students are not allocated to jobs by their University. This approach by UK recruiters gives students the flexibility to explore a wide variety of career areas and an opportunity to take ownership of their own career development and stand out.

**Key priorities** for international students are therefore to understand the UK graduate job market and what UK graduate employers are looking for. It is also important to actively participate in the UK study experience to boost English language development, cultural exposure and communication skills. There is extensive help available to students studying at The University of Manchester around the graduate job market and developing skills including specialist sessions for international students during the Welcome Week/ Orientation programme.

The University is also a truly multicultural environment with students from over 140 countries studying here. There are an extensive network of student societies and activities available for students to get actively involved.

### **What about my chosen career area?**

Although graduate schemes are a popular route for university graduates, for a few career areas graduate training programmes are less common and typical starting salaries can vary and as can requirements for

previous working experience. To explore the UK job market for your preferred career and how employers typically recruit, please see: [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/options/sectors/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/students/options/sectors/) and [www.prospects.ac.uk/sectors.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/sectors.htm) Researching this now will enable you to prepare before study if you need to.

### **Transferring international qualifications and experience between countries– is this possible?**

Some international students have previous working experience and are members of professional bodies in their home country. If you are looking to work in the UK during or after your studies at a professional level check whether your international qualifications and experience are transferable or whether a conversion course is necessary. Contact the relevant professional body in the UK to find out. Similarly you will need to check if a UK professional qualification is accepted by professional bodies overseas or whether conversion courses are necessary. For links to UK Professional Bodies please see:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_professional\\_associations\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_professional_associations_in_the_United_Kingdom)

### **Further information:**

To stay up to date with the latest announcements on the UK Points Based Immigration System, The University of Manchester has a useful website at: [www.manchester.ac.uk/pbs](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/pbs) Prospective students may also find the Careers Blog for international students also useful for updates –

[www.manchesterinternationalcareers.wordpress.com](http://www.manchesterinternationalcareers.wordpress.com)