

Legal Requirements

Anyone driving in the UK must:

- Have a valid current **DRIVING LICENCE**
- Be covered by **INSURANCE**
- Drive a vehicle **REGISTERED** in the owner's name
- Drive a vehicle with valid **ROAD TAX** (there are some exemptions)

Immigration Issues

Since the 14th July 2014 applicants for a UK driving licence have had to show that they hold immigration permission to be in the UK for at least 6 months, unless:

- They have an EEA driving licence, or
- They have a driving licence from a designated country
 - For driving in **England, Scotland and Wales** the designated countries are: Andorra, Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Canada*, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands*, Hong Kong, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Republic of Korea*, Singapore, South Africa**, Switzerland and Zimbabwe.
 - For driving in **Northern Ireland** the designated countries are: Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Provinces & Territories of Canada*, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands*, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, South Korea*, Singapore, South Africa**, Switzerland and Zimbabwe.

*Some restrictions on what vehicles you can drive apply

**Format of the licence held is relevant

Driving Licence

Depending on where your licence was issued you may be able to:

- Drive in the UK using your current licence
- Apply to exchange your existing licence for a UK licence

OR

- You may have to take a British driving test

Where are you from?

- If you have a driving licence that is issued **by a country which is in the EEA** you can drive for as long as your licence remains valid or you can apply to exchange your licence for a British one. This is often referred to as holding a 'Community Licence'
 - If your EEA licence expires you **must** apply for a British driving licence
 - EEA countries are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

If you hold a licence from:

- **Australia; Barbados; British Virgin Islands; Canada; Falkland Islands; Faroe Islands; Gibraltar; Hong Kong; Japan; Korea; Monaco; New Zealand; Singapore; South Africa; Switzerland or Zimbabwe**
 - You can drive for up to 12 months from the last time you entered the UK.
 - You must apply to exchange your license for a British one **BEFORE** this time elapses or stop driving when 12 months has passed.
 - You must exchange your driving licence within 5 years of entering the UK

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- Exchanging your Driving Licence for a British one costs £50 and full instructions on how to do this can be found in the INF38 leaflet available from the Post Office.
- **Canadian nationals** will only be able to exchange their licence for one to drive a car with automatic transmission.
 - To gain a manual licence, they will need confirmation of a manual test passed from the relevant licensing authority or have to sit a manual test in the UK.
- **If you hold a driving licence that has been issued from a country that has not been mentioned (e.g. China/India/Nigeria/Middle Eastern countries etc.) you can drive for a period of up to 12 months based on your student status.**
 - After 12 months you **must** apply for a provisional licence and take a British driving test.
 - You can start this process once you have been in the UK for 6 months.

From June 2014 the DVLA has the power to remove your UK driving licence from you if you are no longer legally resident in the UK.

Applying for a UK Provisional Driving Licence

You can apply for a Provisional Driving Licence by post and it costs £50. Full instructions on how to do this can be found in the INF38 leaflet available from the Post Office.

How Long Does It Take?

- DVLA aims to deliver your driving licence to you within one week of receiving your application. It will take longer if your health or personal details have to be checked.
- You will need to wait for your new licence to arrive before driving.

When you are driving on a provisional Licence you must:

- Display red and white L Plates at the front and rear of the vehicle
- Always have a co-passenger who is over 21 and who has held a full UK, NI or EEA driving licence for at least 3 years
- NOT drive on the motorways
- There are many driving instructors in the UK who will teach you about driving in the UK and help you to arrange your driving test.
- Driving lessons can cost between £16 and £30 per hour. Some instructors offer deals or discounts for students so shop around.
- There are some leaflets about local driving instructors available in B68 or you can search online or in the local paper.

Insurance

The law in the UK requires all motorists to have valid insurance that provides them with insurance cover for the vehicle they are driving.

It is illegal to drive a car without insurance and you could face legal prosecution if caught.

Normally, people will get insurance for them to drive a particular vehicle (i.e the car that they, or a family member, owns). It is possible to get insurance that will cover you to drive any car but this is very expensive.

Generally speaking, international students will need to get insurance when they buy or intend to drive a car.

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Types of Insurance

- Comprehensive (fullest cover)
- Third Party, Fire and Theft
- Third Party (minimum cover) **Note:** Third Party insurance will not cover damage to your own car if you are involved in an accident deemed to be your fault.

You can get insurance from many places and these include:

- Online
- Post Office
- Via your bank account

Insurance Beware!

- If you include any incorrect information on your insurance form you will invalidate your insurance policy.
- If an online form asks if you have a full driving licence this will probably refer to a full British licence even if this is not stated, do not tick yes to this answer but seek further advice from the insurance company.
- If you borrow a friend's vehicle, always check that they have insurance which allows you to drive it. If the car you are going to drive does not belong to you, then even if the owner has insurance, it may not cover you to drive unless you are a named driver or it is an 'any driver' policy. Even 'any driver' policies may not cover learner drivers, or people driving on foreign licences. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure that she or he is insured to drive a vehicle legally

Buying a car

All motor vehicles in the UK must be:

- **Registered**
- **Taxed**
- **Insured**

Registration

If you buy a new or used car you must ensure that it is registered in your name.

Full guidance on how to go about this can be found on the DVLA website at: <https://www.gov.uk/vehicle-registration>

Note: If you have bought a vehicle from home, and it will be in the UK for longer than six months, you will still need to register it in your name!

Road Tax

Before you can drive your vehicle, you must ensure that you have valid road tax. You can buy your road tax at the post office or online using the GOV.UK website (<https://www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax>) and the price depends on your car's engine size.

To buy road tax you at the post office need to fill in a V10 form (available from the Post Office) and take with:

- The car registration document (that you will get when you register your car)
- Your certificate of insurance
- A current test of roadworthiness (MOT)
- The correct fee

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Please note that according to the EU COUNCIL DIRECTIVE of 28 March 1983 on tax exemptions within the Community for certain means of transport temporarily imported into one Member State from another (83/182/EEC). **Students from EU countries are exempted from Road Tax.**

M.O.T. Certificate

- All cars over 3 years old must be tested once a year to make sure that they are roadworthy.
- An MOT test is available at most garages but always check to ask that they are an approved MoT centre.
- You will pay a set price to have the test and then extra for any work that needs to be done.
- If your car passes the test, you will be given the MoT certificate.

It is illegal to drive a car that does not have a current MoT certificate

Motoring Organisations

Motoring organisations, such as The AA, RAC and Green Flag, are those that you join in case your car breaks down whilst you are driving. They will come and try to fix your car and if they cannot will take your car to a garage for you. It is a very good idea to join a motoring organisation as getting a mechanic to come out to your car or getting your car towed to a garage can be very expensive. There are different levels of cover that you can get. Make sure you check what options are available and shop around to get the best deal- this might be online. Check with your insurance company (or bank) if you have any motoring cover included in your policy already.

On the Road

- You must drive on the left-hand side and overtake on the right-hand side
- If you are riding a motorcycle or moped you must wear a helmet
- The driver and front seat passengers must wear seat belts
- Rear seat passengers must wear seatbelts where fitted
- You must not drive under the influence of drink or drugs
- You must observe speed limits
 - 20, 30 or 40 miles per hour (mph) in built up areas
 - 70 mph on motorways
 - 60 mph on all other roads (except where stated)
- You should read and understand the 'Highway Code' a guide to driving in the UK. Available in bookshops and online: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code>

Producing Your Documents

If you get stopped by the police and you do not have all your information in the car, they may ask you to 'produce your documents'. This means that you must take your: certificate of insurance; registration certificate; driving license and MoT certificate to a police station within 7 days of their request.

Failure to do so is a criminal offence and you could get fined or take to court!

Further Information

Available online

- UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) information on driving <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Driving>
- DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency>
- Government Motoring Information: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving>
- The Highway Code: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code>

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Leaflets available from the Post Office

- INF38- Driving in Great Britain (GB) as a visitor or a new resident
- D100- What you need to know about driving licences