

## 1. High street banks comparison table

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Address of local branches to get support if needed	Suitable for: Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students?	Study Abroad students?	Pre-sessional students?	Sharia law compliant?
Barclays	<a href="#">Barclays Bank Account</a>	Free	Free	Online: free In the bank: £25 if outside of Europe, free inside Europe.	<i>Broadmead:</i> 55 Broadmead, Bristol BS1 3EA (this branch can no longer offer appointments to see students)	Yes <i>Minimum length of study 2 years, or 1 year for postgraduates</i>	No	Yes, if UCAS + visa links to the PG course, otherwise no.	Yes – no interest on this account
<b>How to open a bank account?</b>		<p><b>INFORMATION CORRECT IN AUGUST 2022, we have not been able to verify if bank follows the same process in September 2023</b></p> <p>To open account you will need to download Barclays App, available from Google Play or Apple. You will need to open an account when you are at your address – the confirmation of address happens via GPS system – the bank will give you instructions how to prove that you are at your address via GPS. Authentication might take up to 2 weeks – you will receive a code to put in the app by post. Only then your account will be active.</p> <p><a href="https://www.barclays.co.uk/current-accounts/bank-account/">https://www.barclays.co.uk/current-accounts/bank-account/</a></p> <p>You will need a UK phone number to open an account</p> <p>You will <b>not</b> be able to attend a meeting in the bank, all documents must be uploaded online (if there is a problem, the bank will send you a message with further instructions)</p>							
<b>Is a bank letter from the University required?</b>		<p><b>No</b></p> <p>The bank will not ask you for a bank letter. To prove your address you will need to be at your home location, your address will be verified by GPS, and then you will be send a code. This might take two weeks or more.</p>							

Opening a bank account in the UK:  
List of banks that our students have used in the past

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Address of local branches to get support if needed	Suitable for:			Sharia law compliant?
						Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students?	Study Abroad students?	Pre-sessional students?	
HSBC	<a href="#">Bank Account</a>	Free	Free	Online: £4  If you change settings to 'Global Money': Free	<i>Cabot Circus:</i> 62 George White Street, Bristol BS1 3BA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes – no interest on this account

**How to open a bank account?**

**INFORMATION UPDATED IN AUGUST 2023**

You will need to be physically in the UK to open a bank account, but you open the account online.

Apply for an account via:

<https://www.hsbc.co.uk/current-accounts/products/bank-account>

After you have filled in the online application form, you will either:

- successfully finish the process online, and will **not need to visit** the branch.

OR

- you will be provided a reference number, and will need to visit the branch to make an appointment to finalise the process.

**Is a bank letter from the University required?**

**Confirmation of student status & proof of address**

- You will need University bank letter as a confirmation that you are a student, and as confirmation of your address.

- If you live in private accommodation - when you ask the University for a bank letter, attach your private accommodation tenancy agreement to your request to speed the process up.

Opening a bank account in the UK:  
List of banks that our students have used in the past

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Address of local branches to get support if needed	Suitable for:			Sharia law compliant?
						Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students?	Study Abroad students?	Pre-sessional students?	
Lloyds	<a href="#">Classic Account</a>	Free	Free	£9.50	<i>Cabot Circus:</i> 44-45 George White Street, Bristol BS1 3BA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

**How to open a bank account?**

**INFORMATION UPDATED IN AUGUST 2023**

You will need to be physically in the UK to open a bank account, but the process is online.

Apply for an account via:

<https://www.lloydsbank.com/current-accounts/all-accounts/classic-account.html>

When filling in your application, make sure the address in the bank account application looks exactly the same as on your student bank letter from the university. If looks different, select 'Address not listed' on your bank account application - you can then type it exactly as appears on your bank letter.

If you have a mobile phone, you will be able to scan a QR code to finish the application, and upload photos for identification, when prompted.

After you have filled in the online application form, you will either:

- successfully finish the process online, and will not need to visit the branch.

OR

- you will be provided a reference number, and will need to visit the branch to make an appointment and finalise the process. Appointments to open an account are available at Cabot Circus Branch only. Information will be given to you as the last step on the online process.

**Is a bank letter from the University required?**

**Confirmation of student status & proof of address**

- If you have a BRP card – you will not need a bank letter, you can fill out the online application.

- If you don't have a BRP card, you will need University bank letter as a confirmation that you are a student, and as confirmation of your address.

Opening a bank account in the UK:  
List of banks that our students have used in the past

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Address of local branches to get support if needed	Suitable for:			Sharia law compliant?
						Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students?	Study Abroad students?	Pre-sessional students?	
NatWest	<a href="#">Select Account</a>	Free	£0	£0 to £30	<p><i>Clifton:</i> 40 Queens Rd, Bristol BS8 1BF</p> <p><i>Broadmead:</i> 11 Broadmead, Bristol BS1 3HF</p>	Yes <i>Minimum length of study 1 year</i>	No	No	No

**How to open a bank account?**

**INFORMATION CORRECT IN AUGUST 2022, we have not been able to verify if bank follows the same process in September 2023**

You will need to be physically in the UK to open a bank account.

If your only proof of address is University of Bristol bank letter, you will need to open an account over the phone by ringing 0800 0157 362. You will need to mention that your proof of address is 'Letter of introduction from the University'.

NatWest team will fill in the application with you over the phone. You will then receive a reference number. Only with this number you will then be able to go to Natwest branch with your Passport, visa and a printed bank letter.

It might take up to **2 weeks** for you to open an account.

**Is a bank letter from the University required?**

**Confirmation of student status & proof of address**

- You will need University bank letter as a confirmation that you are a student, and as confirmation of your address.
- If you live in private accommodation - when you ask the University for a bank letter, attach your private accommodation tenancy agreement to your request to speed the process up.

Santander	<a href="#">Basic Current Account</a>	Free	£0	£25	<p><i>Broadmead:</i> 7-13 Merchant St, Bristol BS1 3EH</p>	Yes <i>Minimum 16 years old</i>	Yes	Yes	No
-----------	---------------------------------------	------	----	-----	--	------------------------------------	-----	-----	----

**How to open a bank account?**

**INFORMATION UPDATED IN AUGUST 2023**

You need to be physically in the UK to finalise the process of opening an account, but the process is fully online, all documents will be uploaded during the application process.

Apply online:

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

**Is a bank letter from the University required?**

**Confirmation of student status**

- You will only need your bank letter to confirm your address, not your student status.

**Confirmation of address**

- University bank letter is required as a confirmation of your address - you will upload it to the system when applying for this account online

## 2. Digital and Mobile-Only Banks

---

Many students in the UK now use digital or mobile-only banking services. These digital banks offer all the usual banking services but do not have high street branches. Here are some things to consider when deciding whether to open a mobile-only account:

### **Advantages of using digital banking**

- Relatively quick and easy set-up
- In fact, some banks will let you set up with your home mobile number before you even arrive in the UK and others do not require bank letters
- Fast in-app card freezing or cancellation if your card is lost or stolen
- Fee-free overseas spending
- Real-time notifications direct to your phone each time you spend money
- Budgeting tools that help you to set spending goals and over-spending alerts
- Auto-saving features which regularly set aside money in separate 'pots'

Some offer features such as 'split the bill', 'shared pots', or sending money to friends

### **Disadvantages of using mobile-only banking**

- No high street branches means that you cannot speak to anyone face-to-face. However, most have responsive telephone and mobile customer services.
- Most have limits on the amount of cash you can withdraw per month

*The University of Bristol does not endorse any particular bank, nor can guarantee their customer service quality. We have however researched available options, and compiled information we found for you about some of the digital and mobile-only banks, their accounts and the documentation required to open one.*

*Information below is correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of writing but may be subject to change.*

Opening a bank account in the UK:  
List of banks that our students have used in the past

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Special Features	Suitable for:			
						Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students?	Study Abroad students?	Pre-sessional students?	Sharia law compliant?
<b>Monzo</b>	<a href="#">Monzo Current Account</a>	Free	Free	This is done via Transfer Wise.  <u>Fees are dependent upon the currency.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Savings pots</li> <li>Send money to other Monzo accounts with no need for bank details</li> <li>Be warned of upcoming bills</li> <li>Split the bill feature</li> <li>Budgeting features</li> <li>No extra charges when spending abroad except when withdrawing cash</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes  Also offers accounts for students aged 16-17	Yes	No
<b>How to open a bank account.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Download the Monzo app on either iOS or Android.</li> <li>Follow the instructions and set up with your email address and a UK phone number</li> <li>Verify your identity with a picture of your passport, national ID, or BRP, and take a selfie video</li> <li>Provide a UK address</li> </ul>							
<b>Is a University bank letter required?</b>		<p><b>Yes – confirmation of address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you live in <b>university operated accommodation</b>, you will <b>require the University bank letter</b> as a proof of your address.</li> <li>If you live in <b>private accommodation</b> - you <b>will not need University bank letter</b>, you will need to upload your tenancy agreement</li> </ul>							
<b>Do you need to be in the UK?</b>		<p><b>Yes – confirmation of address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the <a href="#">Monzo website</a>, if you do not have a UK address, you cannot open a Monzo account.</li> </ul>							

Opening a bank account in the UK:  
List of banks that our students have used in the past

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Special Features	Suitable for: Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students? Study Abroad students? Pre-sessional students?	Sharia law compliant?
Revolut	<a href="#">Revolut Standard</a>	Free	Free	No fee for the 130 countries it supports. Relies on the live real exchange rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make easy transfers to savings pots</li> <li>• Buy, hold or exchange crypto currencies</li> <li>• Instant payment notifications and budgeting tools</li> <li>• Send money to any Revolut customer in the world</li> </ul>	<p>Please note that Revolut supports legal residents of the EEA, UK, Australia, Singapore, Switzerland, Japan and the US.</p> <p>If you are not a resident of one of these countries, you will need to prove your legal right to remain in one of their supported countries (e.g. visa, residence permit)</p> <p>You must also be over 18 to apply.</p>	No
	<b>How to open a bank account?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Download the Revolut app directly from either Google Play or the Apple App Store</li> <li>• Follow the instructions and set up with your phone number (can be UK number or one of the supported countries)</li> <li>• Verify your identity with a picture of a valid government-issued photo ID and a picture of your face</li> <li>• You can order your first physical Revolut card free of charge. To do so, go to the 'Card' section in the app and choose 'Physical'. Make sure your delivery address is correct down to the flat number level.</li> </ul>					
	<b>Is a bank letter required?</b>	<p><b>Maybe, if you are resident outside the EEA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are not a resident in one of Revolut's supported countries (EEA, UK, Australia, Singapore, Switzerland, Japan and the US), then you will need to provide your legal right to remain in the UK e.g. visa, residence permit. If you do not have one of these, proof of address is required. In this instance, a bank letter from the University <b>may</b> be sufficient but you need to enquire with Revolut, as the University has not yet tested it with this Bank,</li> </ul>					

Opening a bank account in the UK:  
List of banks that our students have used in the past

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Special Features	Suitable for:			
						Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students?	Study Abroad students?	Pre-sessional students?	Sharia law compliant?
Starling	<a href="#"><u>Starling Current Account</u></a>	Free	Free	<p><a href="#"><u>Depends on the currency.</u></a></p> <p>They offer low-cost options (average 30p) and SWIFT options (average £5.50)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compatible with Google Pay and Apple Pay</li> <li>cash deposits and withdrawals via the Post Office</li> <li>a daily ATM withdrawal limit of £300 in the UK</li> <li>mobile cheque deposits up to £500</li> <li>fast and secure money transfers to bank accounts in 38 countries worldwide with 20 currencies, with no hidden fees</li> <li>24/7 in-app customer service chat (phone number only available for lost or stolen cards emergencies)</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>How do I open an account?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starling supports phone numbers from <a href="#"><u>40 different countries.</u></a> If you do not have a phone number from one of these countries, you will need to obtain a UK phone number.</li> <li>Download the Starling app from either Google Play or the Apple App Store</li> <li>Follow the instructions and sign up with your phone number</li> <li>Verify your identity with a picture of your passport or EU/EEA ID card, and take a selfie video</li> </ul>							
<b>Is a bank letter required?</b>		<p><b>Maybe – as proof of address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may need to confirm your postal address. In this case, use a bank letter from the University</li> </ul>							



Opening a bank account in the UK:  
List of banks that our students have used in the past

Bank	Most common account for international students	Fee to open an account	Monthly fee	Cost of money transfers abroad	Special Features	Suitable for:			
						Undergraduate and postgraduate degree students?	Study Abroad students?	Pre-sessional students?	Sharia law compliant?
<b>Wise</b>	<a href="#">Wise Personal Account</a>	Free	Free	Various fees, very competitive in comparison to high street banks.  Other online banks use Wise's transfer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple money transfers with competitive rates</li> <li>• Biometric security</li> <li>• Send and receive money from countries all over the world</li> <li>• Pay online for goods in different currencies</li> <li>• Transfer money between your home country bank account and UK Wise bank account at very low interest rates</li> <li>• Hold a variety of different currencies in one account</li> <li>• Multiple ways to pay including Google/apple pay</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Good alternative to credit cards
<b>Wise</b>	<b>How to open a bank account?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go to the <a href="#">Wise website</a> to open an account</li> <li>• To activate your account, you will need to transfer in a minimum of £20 GBP from your home country account and upload a picture of your official ID: passport, national ID card or driving licence. This will then allow you to see your bank details</li> </ul>							
	<b>Is a bank letter required?</b>	<b>No</b>							