

North of England

Historical attractions, a welcoming environment and high quality educational institutions are all on offer for international students studying in the Midlands or north of England. Bethan Norris finds out more.

Agent comments

'We get quite a few enquiries for mainstream education courses in the north of England, the reasons being the cost of living and the quality of courses offered. Word of mouth is also very important, from people that have been there [who] spread the good word around. My perceptions are that people [in the North of England] are more friendly and also that you can still meet and experience the English way of life [there]. I explain that speaking and listening to English with a different accent is a useful experience.'

Panos Nikoloutsopoulos, Balakakis Tour Operators, Greece

'I have never been to the north of England myself, though I have heard many positive comments about this part of Britain. Those who have been to York and Scarborough say that these places are very impressive. We promote study opportunities in all parts of Britain and I always emphasise that there are many interesting and exciting places in the UK and not only London. Russians like to go to London or to the south. Unfortunately the north of the country is less popular.'

Svetlana Busigina, British Council, Russia

For international students who think that studying in the UK automatically means studying in London, discovering major northern cities, such as Leeds, York, Manchester and Liverpool, can be a surprising yet rewarding experience. With a reputation for friendliness, many cities in the Midlands or north of England have large student populations that invariably mean a busy and exciting social scene.

'Life is certainly for living in Manchester,' says Mike Gibbons from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), which is situated in the heart of Manchester. 'It's a lively cosmopolitan city offering an enviable mix of multicultural attractions. Buzzing with events, clubs and bars - often with great student discounts and special offers - [students] are never short of things to do.'

Louise Story, from The People's College in Nottingham, says the same about her city, located in the Midlands. 'Nottingham is regarded as one of the UK's favourite student cities. Its buzzing nightlife, with clubs, bars, cinemas, theatres and restaurants, attracts students and visitors from across the region,' she asserts.

Home to the two well-known universities of Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham, the city also has good sporting associations. 'The city boasts a wealth of sporting opportunities for the spectator, including football at Nottingham Forest and Notts County, cricket at Trent Bridge, Holme Pierrepont National Watersports Centre, international tennis tournaments and the National Ice Centre,' says Story.

As well as providing numerous student-centred, extra-curricular activities, England's north and the Midlands are also home to many high quality universities, which are a lure for both international and domestic students. '[We are] one of only six UK universities to be ranked in the top ten of every university league table,' relates Margo Hansen from the University of York. 'York has an outstanding reputation for the quality of its teaching and research.'

Courses in computer science, economics and electronics are particularly popular with international students, according to Hansen, and she puts this down to these departments being 'among the best in the UK'. At UMIST, the most popular subjects with international students are 'engineering, technology, management and computing, mainly because of the reputation of the institution, the links with the students' home country and the employment rate for our graduates across the world', says Gibbons.

For international students hoping to progress on to higher education in this area of England, there are many opportunities to perfect English language skills and take further education courses. Bishop Auckland College in County Durham offers English language courses and is hoping to develop opportunities for progression to full-time courses. Kevin Burns at the college points out that international students benefit from the individual attention they receive, while also being integrated into college life. He adds, 'The northeast offers spectacular landscapes and scenery with a diverse range of cultural attractions including the Bowes Museum, Raby castle, the Beamish museum and Hartlepool Historic Quay.'

Accommodation is an important consideration for any student moving to a new country and many universities and colleges in this area offer single students a place in university residences for the duration of their studies. The University of York is split up into eight colleges that all provide on-site accommodation with easy access to the city centre and all its attractions. 'Events such as the Christmas Festival, St Nicholas' Fair and Jorvik Viking Festival ensure that the city is lively throughout the year,' says Hansen.

Selection of higher education institutions in the North of England

Name	Location	Pay agency commission	No. of students	% int. students
Bishop Auckland College	County Durham		1,000	-
Lancaster University	Lancaster		10,000	30
Loughborough College	Loughborough	✓	2,500	14
The People's College	Nottingham	✓	12,000	7.5
University of Central England	Birmingham	✓	11,500	10
University of Northumbria	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	✓	14,000	18
University of York	York	✓	10,000	14
West Cheshire College	Chester	✓	3,291	7