



Managing money on your year abroad

Student Funding team guide

Studying or working abroad can be a great experience but it's important to consider your budget to make sure you can make the most of it. Developing a good budget now will help you feel more prepared and avoid money problems further down the line.

Work out your income

Funding for your time abroad might work differently to the money you normally receive when studying at Warwick, so make sure you know what you're entitled to and get any applications in on time.

If you are eligible for a student loan, be careful to tick the right boxes about where you are living and studying in each term on your application so you can be assessed for the right amount of money. Don't forget to send your declaration form back - Student Finance England will need this before they can pay your money and it can be difficult and lengthy to sort out if you are already abroad!

Check when your payments are due to go in to your bank account so you can work out if you'll have enough money available to meet payment dates you will have, such as accommodation.

There are ways that you can top up your income, such as trying to save some money before you leave and talking to your family to see if they can offer any help. Look into part-time work opportunities whilst you're away but remember this might depend on your availability and visa restrictions.

Research your expenses

Take some time to think about the day to day expenses that you will have during your year abroad. Don't forget to include extra costs, such as travel, medical insurance and smart clothes for placements. Doing your research into these costs now will really help you to get an idea of how far your money will go.

Remember that the cost of living in the country that you are working or studying in might be quite different to what you are used to. There are some useful websites, such as numbeo.com that give a comparison of day to day living costs between cities across the world. Find out what is included in your rent to make sure you aren't budgeting for and buying things unnecessarily.

Don't only think about costs related to your study or work, remember to include activities that you want to get involved in whilst you're away. For example, you might want to spend some time travelling in the region you are visiting, and this will cost money.

Be smart with your money

Always look at ways you can make some savings on the expenses you have. Use comparison websites to get cheaper deals on flights or insurance and also better rates on exchanging your currency - moneysavingexpert.com is a really good website to start with. Talk to other students who have lived and studied in the countries where you are going to get their tips and advice on making your money go further.

You should notify your bank that you will be studying abroad and check out any bank charges that might apply for withdrawing cash or using your debit card. Think about setting up internet banking so you can keep better track of your money. If you are going to be away for a while, consider opening an account in the country you are studying or working in as you might find it easier and cheaper to make payments this way.

If you currently have a mobile contract, talk to your provider to see what the charges will be for using it abroad. Look into mobile deals in the country you are going to as this might work out cheaper and avoid roaming charges. Think about other ways to keep in touch such as Skype that will cost less.

Try to build in a contingency fund in case an emergency crops up, like an expense you hadn't planned for or a delay in receiving your funding.

Work out your budget

A good budget takes time to set up so the first thing to do is to set aside some time to work through your money, income and expenses.

Everyone budgets in a different way and there are lots of tools available. If you don't already budget regularly, have a go at finding a way that suits you. You might prefer to keep track of your money by completing a paper budget planner or making a note of payments coming in and going out in your diary. If you are more technically minded, you might like to try a spreadsheet that can work things out for you or a budget app like the Warwick Budget Calculator that gives you a real-time picture of your cash flow and help you to keep track of where your money is going.

There are lots of links to tools like these on the Managing Your Money section of the Student Funding website.

Once you have an idea about whether your income is going to cover your expenses, you can revisit your costs to see if you can go without them or get them cheaper to save some money.

What happens if things go wrong?

Don't suffer in silence if things aren't going quite according to plan. Even if you are studying away from the university, you can still contact the Student Funding team for advice about your finances so get in touch with us if you need to. It's important to remember that by spending a bit of time to prepare your budget in advance will help you to avoid money problems later on.