

## Book Review

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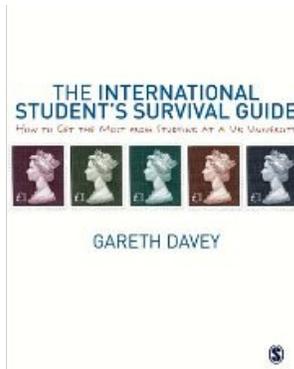
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<http://jistudents.org/>**International Student's Survival Guide**

Davey, G. (2008). *The international student's survival guide: How to get the most from studying at a UK University*. London, UK: SAGE

**Reviewed by Ian McDonald**, Birmingham City University (UK).



This guide, by Gareth Davey, is aimed at both those considering studying in the UK and those already doing so, with much of the material relevant to both groups. Whilst clearly aimed at students, the publication will also be useful to members of staff who work, or are looking to work, with international students. The book will help staff develop a greater appreciation of the issues and concerns international students face whilst studying abroad, for example, cultural differences between the UK and students' home countries and the processes international students have to go through to gain entry onto UK degree programmes. This is important as staff may lack sufficient training about how to best support international students, this book provides a helpful guide to understanding key issues which affect international students.

The book is broken down into thematic chapters which are logically organized, beginning with a chapter on 'Choosing and applying for your course' and ending with 'Life after graduation'. One of the key strengths of the book is that it is immensely practical and goes into incredible detail, for example, in Chapter 2, 'Leaving home and arriving in the UK', there is a step-by-step guide to all of the procedures and processes a new student would encounter on arrival at a British airport. Similarly, there is a short section on staying safe in the UK, which gives practical tips and details of how to contact the emergency services in the event of an emergency. As well as explaining the practicalities and the many positive aspects of studying in the UK, Davey does not hide from the fact that there may be problems and dangers too. There is a brief section on culture shock, which deals with the topic honestly and openly. Similarly, the author is not afraid to remind his readers of that a possible consequence of failing to adhere to British Law is deportation.

Chapters 7 and 8 are particularly important as they examine current academic culture in the UK, for example, the organizational structure of universities, teaching styles and student expectations for participating in seminars/lectures. These issues are vitally important due to the far more social constructionist teaching style that exists in the UK, which can be a shock to international students used to a more traditional teaching style, where the faculty is the all knowledgeable, unquestionable 'transmitter of knowledge'. The main element which is lacking are actual accounts of the experiences of international students who have studied in the UK. Including direct student testimonials would add an extra dimension and provided a helpful addition to the views of the author himself.

Overall, this book is a good resource for prospective students to help make informed choices. It will also provide a valuable resource to members of staff who seek to better support international students studying in the UK.