

## Country Profile - Russia

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### Job market

#### What are my chances of getting a job?

Opportunities in Russia include teaching English or working for an international firm, particularly in the areas of management or sales. It is more likely for graduates to join a large international company and be transferred by request to working in Russia than it is to find a job in Russia by applying to Russian firms.

- **Typical problems encountered:** while there are no laws to prevent foreign citizens from working in Russia, applying for a visa to live and work there for longer than a year is a lengthy and difficult process. The country has the highest number of academic graduates in Europe, so there is no shortage of candidates to fill graduate positions.
- **How to improve your chances:** opportunities are good for experienced UK managers and professionals with Western companies in Russia, but opportunities for new graduates are largely confined to teaching and voluntary positions with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). English is the main business language so there is a high demand among Russians to learn English and a strong TEFL market.
- **Language requirements:** an excellent knowledge of Russian is crucial, particularly outside Moscow. Russian is spoken throughout the country, along with some English, French and German. There are many local languages, notably Turkish and other Central Asian languages. English and Russian are the main business languages. Apart from courses at international colleges, it is unlikely that any degrees will be taught in anything but Russian.

#### Where can I work?

- **Major industries:** oil, natural gas, metals and timber. Other large industries include manufacturing, defence, electronics, IT outsourcing, mobile technology and banking.
- **Industries in decline:** traditional farming and textiles.
- **Shortage occupations:** transport, construction, IT, engineering and teaching.
- **Major companies:** Alfa Group (investments), Gazprom and Novatek (gas), Rosneft and TNK-BP (oil), Beeline (telecommunications), VTB Bank, Severstal and Novolipetsk (steel), Rusal (aluminium).
- **Search for more companies:** [Kompas](#) is a worldwide business directory searchable by country and product/service. See also the [Russian Yellow Pages](#), the [Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation](#) and the [Russo-British Chamber of Commerce](#).
- **Major cities:** Moscow (capital and largest), St Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Nizhny Novgorod and Yekaterinburg.

#### What's it like working in Russia?

- **Average working hours:** 40 hours a week.

- **Holidays:** typically 28 days per year. There are nine public holidays in Russia, including New Year, Russian Orthodox Christmas (7 January) and National Unity Day (4 November).
  - **Tax rates:** 13% flat tax rate for residents, 30% for non-residents. Permanent residents (defined as anyone living in Russia for at least 183 days in any calendar tax year) are required to pay tax on their earnings in Russia and overseas, while non-residents working in Russia only have to pay tax on their income earned in Russia.
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## Applying for jobs

Jobs can be found through personal contacts, agencies or organisations based in the UK, or through job advertisements in the Russian local and national press, as well as on websites. A great number of job vacancies are advertised online in Russia, so you can apply from anywhere in the world as long as you are willing to arrange travel should you reach the interview stage. It is unlikely that costs will be reimbursed.

If you choose to target recruitment agencies in Russia, you will usually need to be qualified and experienced. Most agencies that recruit international applicants request a CV in English to be sent by email or completed on their website.

Networking is an essential skill for job hunting in Russia. Developing and using personal contacts should be an important part of your strategy.

Although some multinational companies use online application forms, a CV and covering letter is the most typical way of applying for an advertised job. The Russian covering letter is an integral part of your job application, and is often a more important tool than the CV for convincing an employer. The style should be formal without appearing too persistent, and it should refer to your present and future plans. Employers may prefer a handwritten covering letter, although typed letters are becoming more common.

The CV needs to be a marketing tool and very detailed, with reference to your level of oral and written knowledge of Russian and other languages. Russian employers will expect you to outline all of your relevant achievements and experiences. Computer literacy and expertise are highly desirable for Russian employers, so detail any relevant skills you have.

The working abroad section of the [Eurograduate - The European Graduate Career Guide](#) has an example of a Russian CV. Advice on CVs and application methods is also available from the various recruitment agencies in Russia, such as [The Russian Connection](#), [Job.ru](#) and those agencies in the UK specialising in Russian opportunities. Most information is in Russian, but some is also available in English.

There are no rules regarding how many interviews will be held, although it is usually more than one. As in the UK, the type of interview also varies depending on the industry and

competition for the vacancy. Making an effort to speak some Russian will be appreciated. If you're not sure whether to expect a panel interview or an informal talk with a future boss, you can call the company to get more information.

### **Will my UK qualifications be recognised?**

If you wish to compare your professional, vocational or technical qualifications with Russian qualifications, you can consult [ENIC-NARIC](#).

### **Do I still need to pay UK tax and National Insurance?**

If you are planning to live and work in Russia, check your UK tax and National Insurance position with [HM Revenue & Customs \(HMRC\)](#) to ensure that you are not losing any UK pension rights.

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## **Vacancy sources**

### **Job websites**

- [Moscow Expat Site](#) - jobs targeted at non-nationals as well as useful articles and forums.
- [Headhunter](#) - uploads CVs and is used by international companies looking for graduates.
- [irr.ru](#) (in Russian)
- [Rabota](#) (in Russian)
- [The Russian Connection](#)
- [Russia Jobs](#)

### **Recruitment agencies**

- [Adecco Russia](#)
- [Kelly Services Russia](#)
- [Manpower Russia](#)
- [TEXON Recruitment](#) - executive agency based in Moscow.

A further list of recruitment agencies in Russia is available through the [Russian Yellow Pages](#) and [Russia on the Net](#) (in Russian).

### **Newspapers**

- [The Moscow Times Careers Center](#) has one of the best English-language job search sites for jobs in Moscow.
- [St Petersburg Times](#)
- Details of other newspapers and news sources in Russia are searchable by region at [Kidon Media-Link](#).

### **Other sources**

There are always jobs for qualified English teachers within the many language schools in Russia. Many only offer part-time jobs and don't pay particularly well, so teachers often work for several different schools at the same time.

For opportunities in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) you should contact organisations operating from the UK, such as:

- [The British Council](#) - Teaching English
- [Teach Abroad](#)
- [TEFL.com](#)
- [TESall.com](#)

## Hidden vacancies

Networking is an essential skill to have when job hunting in Russia. Alongside looking at job adverts in the local and national press, developing and using personal contacts should be an important part of your job-hunting strategy.

If you are in Russia, involvement with expatriate groups can help you find information on vacancies.

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## Work experience

### Work placements and internships

Russia does not have many work experience opportunities for foreigners. Almost all the available schemes are for teaching English, and opportunities to take paid or voluntary work in conservation or local communities are scarce. If you wish to gain experience in areas such as journalism, law, medicine, tourism, voluntary and NGOs, check for short-term opportunities with an organisation that has a branch in your own country first.

### Exchange programmes

- [AIESEC \(Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales\)](#) offers exchange programmes for students and recent graduates who are interested in business, development or education, or who are from an IT or engineering background.
- [IAESTE \(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience\)](#) arranges paid, reciprocal exchange summer placements for science, engineering and technology students for a small fee.

## Teaching schemes

There is a high demand for English teachers in Russia. Most teaching positions ask for a TEFL qualification, and are in schools in large towns and cities. Teaching in villages is also

possible. [GeoVisions](#) offers live-in teaching opportunities, where English-speaking foreigners are partnered with a family in exchange for teaching them English for 15 hours a week.

[Language Link Russia](#) offers teacher-intern placements for those who wish to teach in Russia but do not have a TEFL qualification.

[EF: English First](#) and [TESall.com](#) also arrange teaching placements in Russia.

## **Volunteering**

Links to a number of organisations running volunteer projects in Russia can be found at [Volunteer Abroad](#).

## **Gap year opportunities**

There are a number of international gap year companies that organise placements in Russia, such as [Gap Year Directory](#). The [Overseas Job Centre](#) has an extensive A-Z list of contacts and articles for gap year opportunities around the world.

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## **Postgraduate study**

### **How does the higher education system work?**

There are two levels of higher education in Russia: non-university and university-level. Non-university level qualifications are offered at institutions known as tekhnikums or uchilishcha, or at colleges. There are around 590 university-level institutions in Russia and these are subdivided as follows, according to the subjects they offer:

- humanities and sciences;
- medical;
- technical;
- agricultural;
- pedagogical.

Russia has more academic graduates than anywhere else in Europe. In the past few years, higher education qualifications have reformed and are comparable to the European system.

The first degree is the four-year Bakalavr (Bachelors) degree. The Bakalavr degree is awarded in all fields except medicine, which takes six years.

Once students have obtained the Bakalavr, they are able to study for a specialist diploma or a Magistr (Masters) degree. The Magistr degree takes two years to complete, is more

research-based than the Bakalavr, and involves the defence of a thesis and final examinations.

Postgraduate education is studied at a university or scientific institute and consists of two parts: the Kandidat Nauk (Candidate of Sciences) and the Doktor Nauk (Doctor of Sciences). The Candidate of Sciences degree normally requires at least three years of study beyond graduation from a university-level higher education institution and the award of the specialist diploma or the Magistr degree. The Doctor of Sciences degree can be earned after a period of further study, typically five to fifteen years, following the award of the Candidate of Sciences degree.

### **What courses are available?**

There has been a growth in vocationally orientated postgraduate courses, including MBAs. Many of these have links with Western institutions. Russian graduates are also keen to engage in postgraduate study abroad, particularly in business-related courses. It is fairly unusual for Western graduates to enter postgraduate study in Russia.

### **Where can I study?**

A database of all higher education institutions that allow international students is available at [Education in Russia](#).

To find out where Russian universities rank internationally, see [Top Universities](#).

### **Applying for postgraduate study**

The general prerequisites for admission to postgraduate study are completion of a full course of study at a university-level higher education institution and the award of a specialist diploma or the Magistr degree. The institution will also want to see proof of creative thinking in practical work or study.

UK undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are recognised in Russia, but you will need to submit an application and degree certificate (original or certified copy) to the Ministry for General and Professional Education. See [Education in Russia](#) for more information regarding recognition of credentials.

Although some institutions offer courses taught in English, most universities require international students to be able to speak a high standard of Russian, and applicants must take either a language test before being accepted onto a course or a one-year preparatory course, which includes training for the Test of Russian as a Foreign Language (TORFL).

Passing the TORFL 1 allows admission to a higher education institution, but TORFL 2 is required to apply for a Bachelors or Masters degree. The TORFL 3 and 4 are only necessary if applying for linguistics courses. See [Study Russian](#) for details of Russian language courses at [Moscow State University](#), but many others are available.

Application deadlines vary between institutions, so you must contact the foreign officer at the university to which you wish to apply.

Applications are made directly to the university. It is important to contact the institution's foreign officer about all aspects of the application. The database at [Education in Russia](#) has the contact details of each foreign officer for all institutions.

The final application will include proof of previous qualifications and grades (preferably translated into Russian), a copy of your passport and a completed application form. The educational institution will then decide whether you can be enrolled. If successful, the institution is responsible for sending a visa invitation and notifying you of any paperwork required for entry to the university.

## **Fees and scholarships**

Annual tuition fees for international students vary from £1,500 to £5,000, depending on the course and institution.

Russian institutions have a statutory obligation to provide accommodation for students, and so the price of halls of residence is included in most tuition fees. Living costs after this are between £100 and £150 a month.

There are a number of state scholarships available to foreign students each year. A state scholarship covers all education-related expenditure including tuition fees, halls of residence rent and medical care. Further conditions for applying for a state scholarship are available at [Education in Russia](#).

## **Are there any exchange programmes?**

There are few exchange programmes between UK and Russian universities, and no Erasmus schemes or similar. Most exchange programmes are arranged through UK universities for degree-level language students only.

## **Will my qualification be recognised in the UK?**

Russia is a member of [ENIC-NARIC](#), a network of national centres that aims to improve academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study in European Union (EU) member states, European Economic Area (EEA) countries and associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Check with [UK National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications \(NRP\)](#) or [UK NARIC \(National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom\)](#) to see how Russian qualifications compare to UK equivalents.

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## **Visa and travel information**

### **Visa requirements and applications**

All foreign nationals need a visa to travel to Russia. You cannot enter the country without a tourist, student or business visa. It is crucial that you follow the guidelines issued by the [Embassy of the Russian Federation in Great Britain](#). If your stay in Russia is to be longer than seven days, your passport must be registered and stamped at the local office of the Russian Federal Migration Service within seven days of your arrival.

To get a visa for Russia, you need to be invited to stay there by a sponsor such as an employer, relative, university, travel agency or other independent agency, etc.

A tourist visa lasts for up to 30 days. Depending on your intentions you will require either a single entry or multiple entry visa. All visas must be applied for via the Russian embassy or consulate in the country where you are (in the UK, this is outsourced to [M/S VF Services \(UK\) Ltd](#) in London or Edinburgh). Processing times vary depending on the applicant's country of origin.

A student visa is one of the most flexible visas available but the invitation must be applied for well in advance by contacting the foreign officer of the university or college where you will be studying. Student visas are initially granted for 90 days but can be extended, depending on the length of your study. You are not permitted to work in Russia on a student visa.

A business visa can last from 90 days to 12 months and must be supported by an agency that is employing or wishes to employ you. Russian companies wishing to employ foreign workers in Russia must apply for a general permit from the Ministry of Ethnic and Migration Policy. This does not apply to employees of embassies, scientists or artists working in institutions established in accordance with international agreements.

If you are not a UK national, contact the Russian embassy in the country where you are currently residing about how to obtain visas. If you are living in the UK, go to the [Embassy of the Russian Federation in Great Britain](#).

You may find it helpful to contact your ministry of foreign affairs (UK citizens should check with the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#)) to find out whether there are any issues to be taken into account when considering travelling to Russia. If you are not in your home country, check with your own embassy in the country where you are.

## **Permanent residency**

The Russian visa system is famously confusing and bureaucratic.

Once you are living and working in Russia, you can apply for a temporary residence permit. The permit may take up to six months to be issued, and lasts for three years.

A permanent residence permit can be applied for after one year of living in Russia on a temporary permit. The permit is issued for five years, and can be renewed at five-year intervals. This permit allows travel in and out of Russia without a visa.

Both types of permit are notoriously difficult to obtain, are applicable only to the region in Russia where the applicant lives, and are subject to a quota system similar to the USA's Green Card system. Applicants have to collate up to 15 documents for their application, including a letter from a police authority from their home country and HIV/AIDS test results.

## Help in an emergency

If you are a UK citizen, the [British Embassy in Russia](#) (in Moscow) or the consulates in St Petersburg or Yekaterinburg (contact details on the embassy website) can issue emergency passports, contact relatives to arrange help with money or tickets, advise on money transfers, or put you in touch with lawyers and emergency doctors. Out-of-hours services will be charged at an hourly rate.

It is extremely important to take good care of your passport as it will also contain your visa. If your passport is lost or stolen, go to the nearest police station and ask for a special form to report and prove your loss (spravka). You will need some passport-sized photos on special matte paper. Take these with a copy of your return plane ticket (with the departure date), and a copy of your original invitation to Russia, and go to the office that supported your visa. It is likely that you will have to pay a penalty fee, but you should get a new visa within a few days.

Emergency contact numbers in Russia are:

- 01 - fire;
- 02 - police;
- 03 - ambulance.

Russia is in the process of introducing the single European emergency telephone number, 112, which will replace the separate numbers for each service. The 112 number has been rolled out in some regions already and also works on mobile phones. See [112 - The European emergency number](#) for up-to-date information on the implementation in Russia.

## Travel advice

Find the latest travel advice and a traveller's checklist on the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) website.

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## Country overview

### Geography

- **Full country name:** Russian Federation
- **Population:** 142.8 million (United Nations, 2011)
- **Border countries:** Russia shares a border with 14 countries, including Finland, Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic states, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China.
- **Climate:** due to the sheer size of Russia, the climate differs widely from one border to the other. In Siberia and to the east of the Ural mountains, temperatures often reach below -30°C in winter. Summer temperatures in Moscow climb as high as 25°C.
- **Terrain:** the terrain varies from low plains to coniferous forest, tundra in Siberia, and ancient mountain ranges.
- **Natural hazards:** there are a few active volcanoes in Russia but these are not close to vastly populated areas and are less dangerous than the permafrost that affects much of the country in winter.

## Living in Russia

- **Cost of living:** although the cost of living in Russia has increased over the last few years, everyday living costs remain comparably low. Accommodation is affordable, transportation is cheap and convenient and utilities are reasonable.
- **Internet domain:** .ru, .рф (Cyrillic .rf for Russian Federation)
- **Health:** standards of health are lower than in the UK, due to air pollution caused by heavy industry and lifestyle differences, such as the importance of strong alcohol in Russian culture. There is a reciprocal healthcare agreement with the UK entitling UK citizens to free hospital treatment. Blood transfusions are to be avoided. Vaccination against hepatitis A and typhoid is recommended in some areas. There has been an increase in HIV/AIDS and STIs in recent years.
- **Laws and customs:** long sentences may be imposed for possession of even small quantities of drugs. You should carry your passport with you at all times. Homosexuality is no longer illegal in Russia, but attitudes are slow to change and compared with many European countries there remains some prejudice. Same-sex couples do not have the right to marry or adopt, and there is no law tackling work discrimination or hate crime towards homosexual and transgender men or women. Some racially motivated attacks by skinhead gangs occur, particularly around the date of Adolf Hitler's birthday in April. The [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\)](#) warns visitors of Asian and Afro-Caribbean descent to take extra caution around this time.

## Economy and finance

- **Currency:** the rouble (RUB)
- **Type of economy:** market economy
- **Health of economy:** Russia is heavily dependent on its exports and so is easily affected by changes in commodity prices. The economy was hit hard by the global economic crisis of 2008-2009 but has since returned to growth. Challenges to economic development include poor infrastructure, an ageing workforce and high levels of corruption. Russia will need to modernise and diversify its economy in the future so it is less dependent on oil and gas production.
- **Unemployment rate:** 6.8% (The World Factbook, 2011).
- **Main exports:** Russia is the world's largest exporter of oil and natural gas. Other major exports include metals, timber, chemicals and military equipment.

## Culture

- **People:** 80% Russian, 4% Tatar, 2% Ukrainian, 1% Chuvash, 1% Bashkir, and numerous ethnic minorities.
- **Major religion:** Russian Orthodox. Muslims also make up a considerable minority.
- **History:** See [BBC Timeline: Russia](#).

## Politics

- **Type of government:** Russia is a federal republic. It is semi-presidential, and power is shared between the president and the prime minister.
- **Major political parties:** United Russia, Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), Yabloko and A Just Russia.

## More information

- [Embassy of the Russian Federation in Great Britain](#)
- [BBC Country Profile - Russia](#)
- [The World Factbook](#)
- [XE Universal Currency Converter](#)

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