

## Expatriate Insider 2021 Survey: The Future of Working Abroad

British expats talk about their career abroad and how they envision their future working life.

- *British expats working abroad are older than average, have higher incomes, and plan to stay abroad forever.*
- *A good work-life balance is everything to British expats, even more important than a good compensation or room for personal development in their career.*
- *Modern concepts of work are quite important in the UK — but they play a far less relevant role in some of the most common destinations for British expats working abroad.*

Munich, 14 September 2021 — Why do British nationals move abroad? According to the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations, 43% of British expats working abroad relocated for their career. While this is the biggest share among the various reasons cited by British respondents, it is still slightly smaller than the global average (47%). Close to one in five (18%) found a job on their own, 14% were recruited internationally, and 9% were sent by their employer. Just 2% moved abroad to start their own business.

Aside from work-related reasons, an above-average share of British expats working abroad originally relocated for their partner's job or education (6% vs. 4% globally), to live in their partner's home country / for love (12% vs. 10% globally), or simply because they enjoy living abroad (5% vs. 3% globally). However, it is rather uncommon among British expats to move abroad to go to school or university (1% vs. 8% globally).

The key focus of this year's *Expatriate Insider* survey, conducted by [InterNations](https://www.internations.org), the world's largest expat community with more than 4 million members, is the future of working abroad. Expats all around the world shared what it is really like to work abroad and described their working conditions. They also provided insights into how new working arrangements (e.g., remote work) are changing their working life and what they would like to see in the future.

### **The Typical British Expatriate Working Abroad Is Older and Planning to Stay**

British expats working abroad are on average 50 years old, which is much older than the global average (43.1 years). They are more likely to be men (56%) than women (44%), while another 1% of respondents from the UK prefer to self-describe their gender identity. Close to two-thirds (65%) are in a committed relationship (vs. 61% globally).

British expats working overseas are in it for the long run, with 33% having lived abroad for more than ten years, nine percentage points more than the global average (24%). More than two in five (42%) could see themselves staying abroad possibly forever, compared to just 30% of working expats worldwide.

### **British Expats Work in Education or as Freelancers**

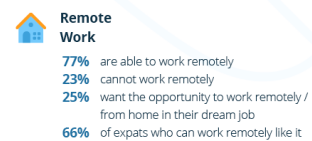
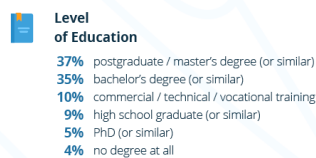
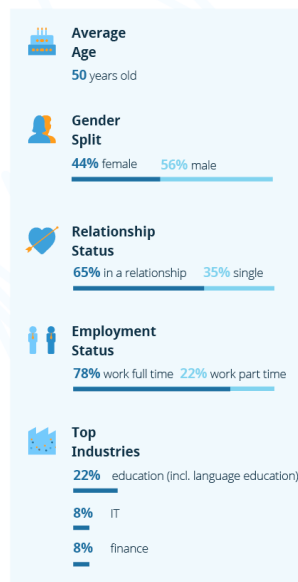
The majority of British expats (78%) works full time (vs. 82% globally). More than one in five (22%) work in the field of education, compared to 12% globally, which makes it by far the most common field of work among British expats. This might be related to English native speakers being much sought after:

the share of Canadian (22%) and US American (25%) expats working in education is also considerably higher than the global average. Other common fields of work among British expats are IT and finance (8% each).

What is more, the share of British expats who are either self-employed / freelancers (18% vs. 11% globally) or running their own business (12% vs. 7% globally) is also bigger than the global average. Another 16% are top managers / executives (vs. 13% globally), while 24% work in a senior / specialist position (vs. 30% globally). Just 11% have a job in lower / middle management (vs. 17% globally).

British Expats

## The Future of Working Abroad



\* 18% found a job on their own, 14% were recruited internationally, 9% were sent by their employer, 2% to start their own business

\*\* Note: This includes working expats and expats looking for a job.

### Comparably Low Level of Formal Education — But High Incomes

The level of formal education among British nationals working abroad is lower than the global average: 4% have no degree at all (vs. 1% globally), and another 9% cite the equivalent to a high school degree as their highest academic qualification (vs. 5% globally). While 35% of British expats working abroad hold a bachelor's degree (vs. 33% globally), the shares of those with a postgraduate / master's degree (37% vs. 47% globally) or a PhD (5% vs. 8% globally) are again below the global average.

This does not seem to affect their income, though: more than three in ten British expats (31%) have a gross yearly income of at least 100,000 USD, compared to 23% globally. Another 31% make between 50,000 and 100,000 USD per year (vs. 33% globally), and just 38% have an income of up to 50,000 USD (vs. 44% globally).

## A Good Work-Life Balance, but Missing Career Opportunities

Exactly three in four British expats (75%) are satisfied with their job in general (vs. 73% globally). They are particularly happy with their work-life balance (72% vs. 68% globally) and their working hours (73% vs. 70% globally). In fact, the average working week among the British respondents (37.9 hours) is two hours shorter than the global average (39.9 hours).

However, just 61% of British expats rate the state of the local economy in their current country of residence positively (vs. 65% globally). And fewer than two in five (37%) are happy with the local career opportunities, which is twelve percentage points below the global average (49%).

This might be related to the most common destinations that British expats move to: Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the USA. Only the USA (2nd) and Germany (8th) rank ahead of the UK (10th) when expats evaluate their local career opportunities in the *Expats Insider 2021* survey. The Netherlands (17th), Switzerland (25th), and Spain (44th) follow further down in the ranking. For example, 60% of expats working *in* the UK are happy with their career opportunities, compared to 69% in the USA and 36% in Spain.

## British Expats Enjoy their Work-Life Balance Now...

When asked what they like best about their current job, 37% of British expats mention the good work-life balance, which makes this the most frequently cited aspect. It is followed by the opportunity to work remotely / from home (35%) and flexible working hours (28%).

More than three-quarters of British expats (77%) are able to work remotely (vs. 78% globally), and 66% of those who can work remotely actually like doing so (vs. 65% globally). More than two in five (42%) even work fully remotely (vs. 39% globally), and 19% work remotely for more than 15 days per month (vs. 18% globally). When they imagine their dream job, the opportunity to work remotely / from home is important for 25% of British expats. This is slightly above the global average (22%), but still far from the most frequently cited factor.

## ...and Consider It Highly Relevant for Their Future Career

So, what *do* British expats find important in their ideal work environment? The most frequently mentioned aspect is a good work-life balance (56%), followed by a good compensation and/or good benefits (49%). Globally, it is the other way around since expats worldwide consider a good compensation and/or good benefits (54%) more important than a good work-life balance (49%). More than three in ten British expats (31% each) also mention flexible working hours and creative/interesting tasks to be relevant for their dream job and future career.

*"A good work-life balance is most important to British expats now and will remain relevant in the future," says Malte Zeeck, InterNations Founder and Co-CEO. "Interestingly, other aspects that are closely related to a modern way of working, such as room for personal development, general career development, and the employer's corporate culture, are not that important to British expats describing their ideal work environment. This is quite interesting since they come from a business culture where such values do seem to play an important role."*

In fact, just 19% of British expats consider room for personal development/growth important when imagining their dream job (vs. 22% globally). The shares are also below average for general career development (14% vs. 20% globally) and the employer's corporate culture/values (12% vs. 15% globally).

## The Concept of New Work Is More Common in the UK than Abroad

As British expats do not rate the above-mentioned aspects highly, they might not mind that they do not (yet) play a big role in their most common destinations. In fact, only 35% of British expats say that factors like autonomy, freedom, creativity, personal development, and self-fulfillment are more important in the business culture of their current country of residence than at home in the UK. These values are closely related to the concept of New Work, which describes the new way of working in the global and digital age. On a global scale, 49% of expats say the same about their host country.

The UK ranks 15th out of 55 countries when it comes to expats comparing the importance of New Work in the local business culture. Among the most common destinations where British expats work, the USA (1st) and the Netherlands (5th) rank ahead, while Switzerland (23rd) and Germany (35th) fall behind. Spain (48th) even lands among the ten destinations worldwide where New Work is *least* important in the local business culture. For example, 66% of expats working *in* the UK agree that New Work is important there, compared to 74% in the USA and 49% in Spain.

## Country Ranking: The Importance of New Work in the Local Business Culture

1 USA	20 Greece	39 Brazil
2 UAE	21 Czechia	40 Philippines
3 Finland	22 Poland	41 Indonesia
4 Estonia	23 Switzerland	42 Chile
5 Netherlands	24 Luxembourg	43 Romania
6 Bahrain	25 Malta	44 Thailand
7 Australia	26 Kenya	45 Cyprus
8 Canada	27 Taiwan	46 China
9 New Zealand	28 Portugal	47 France
10 Sweden	29 Hungary	48 Spain
11 Ireland	30 Colombia	49 Italy
12 Norway	31 Russia	50 Kuwait
13 Denmark	32 South Africa	51 India
14 Singapore	33 Mexico	52 Turkey
15 United Kingdom	34 Austria	53 South Korea
16 Malaysia	35 Germany	54 Egypt
17 Oman	36 Vietnam	55 Japan
18 Qatar	37 Hong Kong	
19 Saudi Arabia	38 Belgium	

### About the Future of Working Abroad Report

This report is based on data from the *Expatriate Insider 2021* survey by InterNations. In total, 12,420 expats participated; the general *Expatriate Insider* report and an overall country ranking were published in May 2021. However, the report "The Future of Working Abroad" uses mainly data sets from expats currently doing any kind of paid work: 8,313 survey respondents — living in 175 destinations and representing 166 nationalities — match this definition of working expats.

In the *Expats Insider 2021* questionnaire, all respondents, regardless of employment status, were asked to provide information about themselves and to rate various aspects of life abroad on a scale of one to seven. The rating process emphasized their personal satisfaction with these factors; the average ratings of six such factors were bundled into three subcategories, and their mean values were used to draw up a topical index for working abroad. The Working Abroad Index is not only part of the overall country ranking, but it also gets referenced in this report. In 2021, the top 5 destinations for working abroad — out of 59 countries in this index — are Taiwan, New Zealand, Czechia, China, and Denmark.

Moreover, working expats answered some additional questions to describe their working life. Some of these questions explore how COVID-19 has been transforming the workplace and how expats envision their ideal work environment. Lastly, the survey included two more rating questions for working expats. They cover the topic of New Work, the new way of working in the global and digital age. Participants were asked to rate how important this concept is in the business culture of their host country and how the latter compares to their home country. The country averages from the first question were used to compare the importance of New Work in various expat destinations.

For a country to be featured in the New Work ranking, a sample size of at least 50 respondents was necessary. This requirement was met by 55 destinations. New Work is extremely important in the business culture of the USA, the UAE, Finland, Estonia, and the Netherlands.

### About InterNations

With around 4.2 million members in 420 cities around the world, [InterNations](#) is the largest global community and a source of information for people who live and work abroad. InterNations offers global and local networking and socializing, both online and face to face. At around 6,000 events and activities per month, expatriates have the opportunity to meet other global minds. Online services include discussion forums and helpful articles with personal expat experiences, tips, and information about life abroad. Membership is by approval only to ensure we remain a community of trust. InterNations is part of the NEW WORK SE, a group of brands that offer products and services for a better working life.

Find more information about InterNations on our [press page, in our company blog](#), or in our [magazine](#).

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