

CANDIDATE INFORMATION



The British School of Tashkent





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Information for Applicants

Thank you for your interest in working at the British School of Tashkent. We hope that by reading through this document and visiting our school website you will be encouraged to apply.

The British Schools Group

The school is a part of The British School's Group currently operating in Russia (The International School of Moscow), Spain (The International School of Marbella & British School of Navarra), China (The British School of Guangzhou & British School of Nanjing) and Malaysia (The British School of Kuala Lumpur). Since the Group started in 2003 it swiftly gained a reputation for excellence, hence the rapid expansion both of the group's number of schools and of the range of year groups offered by each one. BSG is an organization that attains excellence by sharing staff and expertise among the various schools and prospects for professional development and career advancement are excellent.

The British School of Tashkent

The British School of Tashkent opened to students in September 2010. It is a new school with a state of the art, fully resourced campus with interactive whiteboards in every classroom. We are currently offering the classes Pre-nursery through to Year 3 (ages 2-8) with the intention of expanding year on year. The school is an exciting and challenging place to work and we aspire to the very highest standards of care and education. The position is suited to dedicated, hardworking professional teachers who are interested in living and furthering their careers in a fascinating location with direct flights to most major cities in Europe and Asia. The ideal candidate would be fully qualified (with either a PGCE or Bachelor of Education Degree) and have experience of teaching the Early Years or Key Stage One.

You will enjoy working with a committed group of colleagues in a state of the art facility, which includes a wide range of teaching spaces linked by a powerful ICT infrastructure. Class sizes are small, with children drawn from both the expatriate and local communities. Every class is very well resourced and is equipped with an interactive white board and all classes are supported by a full time native / fluent English speaking teaching assistant.

Professional Development for expatriate and local academic staff - a key element of the school ethos

Successful applicants will be expected to participate fully in the development of our rapidly expanding school and a professional development cycle that will keep you fully updated on the latest developments of UK best practice.

An important strand of the school's PD programme relates to local staff. Tashkent has a wealth of superbly skilled, highly qualified people with a relative lack of opportunity to receive a salary and conditions that reflect their skills. One of the school's main missions here in Tashkent is to train and develop these staff, partly through passing on the skills and advice of our excellent expatriate teachers. There is an atmosphere of equal respect between local and expatriate staff (something that not all international schools can truthfully claim) and we aim to make an excellent contribution to the community here not only through our work with the children but also by providing the excellent local staff with salary, conditions and professional opportunities appropriate to their skills. This PD programme does not only benefit the academic staff; all utility staff, guards, cleaners and clerical staff, for example, are given free English lessons.

Contract and package

This contract is annually renewable from August 2010 academic year. The package includes a competitive tax-free salary, international medical insurance with direct billing, an annual flight allowance and accommodation. Free language lessons (Russian or Uzbek) will be an optional part of the cycle for teachers who are interested in making the most of this exotic and fascinating setting.

If you would like to apply for the position of Class Teacher at the British School of Tashkent, please send your CV, letter of application and a recent photograph to headmaster@britishschool.uz for the attention of Mr. Raymond Finch.

About Tashkent

Recognized in 2007 as the cultural capital of the Islamic world, Tashkent is the most cosmopolitan city in Uzbekistan. It is home to over 3 million people from a range of nationalities - Uzbek, Russian, Korean, Armenian, Kazakh, Tartar as well as a network of expatriates from various parts of Europe and Asia. Arriving in summer you will be instantly seduced by the tree lined streets, outdoor cafes serving shishas, green tea and barbequed meet, small bars where you can watch couples walk past hand in hand, and the general relaxed atmosphere. The main city hangouts have a cosmopolitan, secular feel with European standards of dress and behaviour, albeit with a Central Asian and Russian flavour.

Safety

Tashkent is a very safe city and you'll feel more than comfortable walking the streets and exploring what the city has to offer. However, like in any big city, care should be taken when walking alone at night.

Medical facilities

There is an international clinic available that also offers dentistry.



Transport & Shopping

The easiest and most common way to get around Tashkent is by taxi. Any small car will pick you up for a nominal fee, about a dollar for most inner city journeys. Buses are even cheaper! If you're not in a rush there is also an ancient soviet tramline. Most impressive is the extensive underground metro that has some truly remarkable soviet stations.

There are plenty of supermarkets where you can do the bulk of your food shopping. Certain goods are hard to come by or very expensive such as imported alcohol (whiskey, French wine etc.), cheeses, fish and seafood (it's a doubly landlocked country), cold meats (except locally produced) and more generally convenience food (microwave meals etc). As Uzbekistan is a developing country with import restrictions you will not find the same availability and selection of food

and household products as in the UK. That having been said, the locally produced fruits and vegetables in season are excellent! The fruit in the summer is especially delicious, in particular the melons, which Uzbekistan is famous for.

It is worth stopping by the local bazaars and seeing the food they have on offer there. You can buy everything from fresh fruit and vegetables, to meat and ready prepared salads, kim-bop, noodles, pickles and spices.

Tremendous pride is taken by Uzbeks in preparing their national dish plov that is similar to a mild lamb curry with subtle spices, fresh vegetables and 'kish mish' - small sweet grapes that lend the dish a delicious contrasting flavor.

Restaurants

One thing Tashkent is not short of are restaurants. As with the retail sector, a full range of options is available from inexpensive local outlets to the full spectrum of ritzy, cosmopolitan eateries you'd find in any buzzing capital. The cheep and cheery local places serve up shashlik and salads laden with mayonnaise. These are generally washed down with local vodka and draft beer to the tune of Uzbek pop music with accompanying belly dancers weaving and shaking between the tightly packed tables. However, if your looking for something more peaceful and closer to home there are numerous restaurants serving, among others, European, Korean, Lebanese, Chinese and Indian cuisine. During the summer most restaurants have outside seating with local places often offering Tapchans to stretch out across.

You will also find you are spoilt for choice when it comes to bars and Pubs, as there are a large number of places catering to all your drinking wants and needs! Popular with the expatriate community are the Irish Pub, Patrick's Pub and Chelsea Pub all of which offer premier league football, rugby, ice hockey and all manner of sporting events. Equally you can stop by one of the local bars such as VM and rock out to a local heavy metal band or opt for the more classy fashion bar and CMI bar; the latter two being favorites for pre-club drinks.

Nightlife

Tashkent has two very large nightclubs in winter, KataKomba and Barkhan and additional clubs with large and luxurious outdoor areas that open most of the year, such as Cinzano. Here you will find the expatriate community and the more affluent of Tashkent society partying the night away. If you grow tired of these there are a large number of student and cheaper nightclubs to be found dotted around the city. Whilst conventional western dance music and Russian/Uzbek pop tend form the basis of the music policy in most clubs, there are some nice bars that cater for alternative music tastes, such as rock/indie hangout VM Bar.

Entertainment

There are regular opera and classical music concerts as well as ballet performances; a legacy leftover from the Soviet period. Although the performances are not of the highest caliber, and can be a little bit hit and miss, tickets are cheap and the experience can be highly enjoyable. Favorites of the expat community include *Carmen*, *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*.

Additionally, there are a number of theatres performing plays in Russian. An intriguing avant garde theatre is the Ilkhom. Here you can watch interesting interpretations of classics such as *Hamlet*, original works written by Uzbek play writes or attend their monthly Rockfest and Streetfests which host rock bands and break dancing troupes. Most plays are in Russian, but there are regular performances with subtitles.



Navoi Theatre

Tashkent's cinemas show the latest Hollywood films, albeit in Russian, with the occasional English showing. If you are a film buff, and don't speak Russian, do not despair as dotted around the city are DVD shops selling all the latest blockbusters and a selection of classic films with English audio tracks.



Once a year Tashkent hosts its very own Fashion Week organized by Gulnora Karimova and her organization Fund Forum. In 2010 the lineups included big name brands such as Balmain, Salvatore Ferragamo, and Max Mara as well as catwalk shows from the best local designers. Fashion Week is part of the wider event Art Week and more information can be found at the website <http://www.style.uz/en/>. Tickets to events during this exciting week can be purchased, but certain events, such as opera legend Jose Carreras' performance on the closing night, are very exclusive with tickets selling at phenomenally high prices!

Out and About

Tashkent's parks really spring to life with small cafes and restaurants once the weather starts to warm up in March making them great places to relax. For quiet walks the Botanical Gardens are ideal, especially in spring when the plant life and trees are blossoming. If you prefer more adventurous hikes you can join the Hiking Club on one of their treks through the Chimkent mountains. In the winter, there is the possibility of skiing in the mountains too! Off-piste, wild routes are available for more adventurous souls.



Hotels such as the Intercontinental and the Dedeman do regular brunches with different international themes most Sundays. You can also pay to become a member of their fitness and spa clubs which give you access to an array of facilities including swimming pools and gyms. While these two examples are fairly pricey, there are numerous good quality alternatives such as Chekov, a chain of 3 gyms/spas and numerous other locations that have outdoor swimming pools for the hot summer months.

The Woman's International Group (TWIG), host an assortment of events on a regular basis, including balls, bazaars, coffee mornings, and conversation clubs. Organizations such as the British Council, French Institute, and German Institute operate in Tashkent. They organize and sponsor music, arts and film events as well as offer courses in their respective languages.

If you are a football fan then you can follow the local Tashkent teams Bunyodkor and Parkhtakor battle for the league title; the former having been managed by Phil Scolari and featured stars such as Rivaldo.



Tourism

Uzbekistan's two main attractions are Bukhara and Samarkand. Travelling to both cities is easy, affordable and very comfortable. First class passengers are treated to large arm chairs like the kind you'd expect in business class on an airplane and if you pay a little extra for luxury class you get your own two person cabin. The journey to Bukhara is either a 7 hour trip on the express train that leaves at 8am or just over 10 hours if you take the overnight train. There are a number of great family run bed and breakfasts especially located near Lyab-I Hauz, a wonderful pool with ancient trees and small restaurants. Kosh madrassah and the ancient Tower of Death, which supposedly even left Genghis Kahn speechless, are real sight to behold not to mention the Arc Fortress and the eerie prison - Zindan.

If you take the express train, Samarkand is only a 3 hour journey from Tashkent. Again you are spoiled for choice when it comes to comfortable family run bed and breakfasts. The impressive Ragistan dominates the old city center;

The Registan of Samarkand was originally, and is still even in its ruin, the noblest public square in the world. I know nothing in the East approaching it in massive simplicity and grandeur; and nothing in Europe... which can even aspire to enter the competition. (George Curzon, Russia in Central Asia 1899)

The holiest site in Samarkand, Shah-I-Zinda, leaves a lasting impression. Despite the extensive renovations, walking along the necropolis of mausoleums is just like stepping back through time. The solemn silence that dominates the resting place of Kussam-ibn-Abbas, the Prophet Mohammed's cousin, will quiet even the least religious of visitors.

Other places of interest are Khiva another important historical city in Central Asia, and the Fergana Valley the most fertile region of Uzbekistan with old towns that date back more that 2000 years!

Hopefully, what is evident from the brief summary of Uzbekistan's history and the above glossing over of Samarkand and Bukhara is how magnificent this region once was, and in many ways still is. A seemingly obscure and out of the way country, it contains a rich and varied history and culture the product of great Persian Empires, Genghis Kahn and the Mongolian Empire, the fearsome Amir Timur, Imperial Russia and then the Soviet Union.

History of Uzbekistan

Arrival of Islam

Ahmad, of the Iranian Saman aristocracy, firmly established Sunni Islam in the region of Central Asia in the 9th Century. Ruler of Bukhara from 875, he also united the region under the Samanid Dynasty bringing about a century of “remarkable political, cultural and economic growth” (Macleod & Mayhew, 16). Under his rule, Bukhara attracted the greatest scholars and poets of the age!

Genghis Khan

Genghis Khan swept across Central Asia leaving a path of destruction in his wake. The Khorezmshah’s (Persianate Sunni Muslim dynasty) governor at Otrar (currently a ghost city located in Kazakhstan) enraged Genghis Khan by slaughtering a passing Mongol merchant caravan. Three envoys were sent to the Shah to demand reparations. The Shah murdered the first and burnt the beards of the other two. Genghis Khan’s response was to send a force of 200,000 to invade Central Asia and defeat the Khorezmshah. In 1220 his army crossed the Syr Darya and made its way to Samarkand and Bukhara. Genghis Khan’s armies were victorious and Central Asia was destroyed.

“For every drop of their blood there flowed a whole Oxus; in retribution for every hair on their heads, it seemed that a hundred heads rolled in the dust at every crossroads.” (Juvaini)]

Out of the ashes rose the Mongolian Empire - Pax Mongolica. One hundred years of stability and recovery ensued and it was during this period that the famous Silk Road burst into life bringing prosperity to Central Asia.

Before he died Genghis Kahn divided his realm into four regions each to be governed by one of his four sons. The region that now includes Uzbekistan was left to ulus of Chagatai. During this time Islam was allowed to prosper, but the fragmentation of power brought about instability and wars.



Amir Timur (1336)

“As there is only one God in Heaven, there should be only one king on earth” perfectly encapsulates Amir Timur’s philosophy. Born near Samarkand in a town called Shakhrisabz he grew into a fearless and merciless war lord.

Meticulous planning enhanced classic nomadic warfare, concluded by brutality on an unprecedented scale. With the plunder and slave-artisans of conquered lands, Tamerlane raised his capital Samarkand to its greatest heights (Macleod & Mayhew, 17).

His empire collapsed to its core upon his death in 1405 while on an excursion to savage China. He was 69 years old!

Mirzo Ulugbeg, one of Tamerlane’s grandsons, was passionate about science and brought about a time of intellectual greatness in Samarkand. However, his love of science over politics and religion instigated a negative Islamic reaction, and eventually brought about his death at the hands of his own son.

The Great Game

Tashkent fell to Tsarist Russia in 1867 followed by Samarkand a year later; Bukhara became a protectorate. Russia’s interest in Central Asia began initially with the promise of gold in the Oxus. As time passed the three main aims became securing a southern frontier, trade development and the liberation of Russian slaves. A potential long-term aim was expanding down to India. This last aim greatly worried Britain and brought about an age of espionage.

Habouring a closet of disguises, armed with little more than languages, unshakeable self confidence and hidden agendas, British officers played hide-and-peek across the desert and mountains with tsarist soldiers and nomadic bandits (Macleod & Mayhew, 21).



The Soviet Period

Uzbekistan was one of four ethnic republics carved out of the Turkestan ASSR (formerly the Turkestan Krai of Imperial Russia) in 1924 by Joseph Stalin. By breaking up the Turkestan ASSR he hoped to dissolve the rallying cries of pan-Turkism and pan-Islam. This policy of divide and rule created nationalities out of a people that had traditionally been nomad and settler Sart.

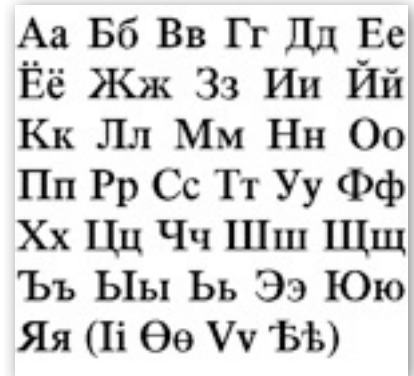
Under Soviet Rule Uzbekistan became one of the worlds largest producers and exporters of cotton. The vast wealth that was created from this lucrative industry meant corruption was especially prevalent in the capital of Uzbekistan and Tashkent “gained infamy as a centre of the union’s underworld” (Macleod & Mayhew, 25). However, under Soviet rule Uzbekistan enjoyed high literacy rates, levels of health and infrastructure in comparison to neighboring countries.

On September 30 1991, Uzbekistan became an independent country following revolution in Russia.

**Many Uzbek conscripts were drafted into the Soviet army to fight during World War II. The casualties suffered by Uzbekistan was over 1 million*

Challenges of Living in Tashkent

When you first arrive in Tashkent not being able to speak Russian or Uzbek can seem very daunting. Russian is quite different from Western European languages and Cyrillic will at first seem mystifying. However, while it is a complex and challenging language to learn, a couple of months lessons will give you the basics needed to get about. As you get to know Tashkent, and your confidence grows in your ability to find your way around, the language barrier seems much less intimidating. Additionally, you will find locals who speak basic to reasonable English many of whom will jump at the opportunity to practice with a native speaker.



The second thing you will notice upon arriving in Tashkent is the money. The largest bank note is 1000 Soum which is about equal to 50 U.S. cents. This will seem ridiculous at first, then tiresome but after just a few months perfectly normal. With regards to changing money the school will provide all the necessary help and assistance.

Certain goods and services that we take for granted in the United Kingdom are not as efficient or readily available in Tashkent. The internet can be slow and most services charge you by bandwidth. If you exceed your monthly bandwidth you can top up either online or from a nearby kiosk. Unlimited internet is expensive! However, over the last year more service providers have appeared on the market and there are deals to be found. As was previously mentioned imported luxury goods are expensive. This especially applies to alcohol. The best locally brewed beer are Sarbast and Turborg, both of which are Carlsberg ventures and decent quality vodka is available at reasonable prices. Most people, especially the expatriate community, are quick to complain about the quality of the local wine. Classico, however, is drinkable and no worse than one of the cheaper bottles you can buy at a supermarket in the UK.



There are power and gas shortages in Tashkent, but if you live centrally or in certain more up market areas you will be largely unaffected.

The internet is very accessible here in Tashkent, although not the same speeds enjoyed by the vast majority of people living in the UK. You will still be able to enjoy BBC iPlayer, etc and be able to chat to family over Skype and keep your Facebook page up to date with all the exciting things you’ll be seeing and doing.

Positive Aspects of Living in Tashkent

Generally speaking, Uzbek nationals are a very friendly and welcoming people. You will find that they are often eager to meet and talk with foreigners and have a real genuine interest in you and where you have come from. This creates a great opportunity to make friends with locals and an excellent opportunity to practice your Russian and/or Uzbek!

The cost of living in Tashkent is exceptionally low! Good accommodation with gardens, small swimming pools and even saunas are available at very affordable prices. Additionally, domestic help such as a cleaner, cook, or gardener are very cheap. One visit by a cleaner to clean a one bed flat costs as little as \$10. While a driver who drives you to and from work as well as on general trips around the city will cost as little as \$100 or less depending how heavily you use them. These luxuries will allow you the freedom to enjoy your time outside of work without the worry or hassle of boring and tiring chores.

Food shopping is very cheap. You have the choice of shopping at Western style supermarkets or in the local bazaars. Both offer great quality, locally produced, fresh vegetables and fruits as well as an assortment of different cuts of meat including pork. The bazaars also sell all manner of other goods including spices, souvenirs, fabrics, carpets and clothes. You can also buy well built local furniture or if you fancy have some furniture made.

Satellite T.V. with English movies, sport (including premier ship football and rugby with English commentary) and news channels including BBC costs \$10 per month. There are also numerous pubs and bars that televise premier ship football and other sporting events.

If you are keen on playing sports and staying fit there a large number of gyms around the city of varying quality and cost. A well-equipped and well-staffed favorite of the expatriate community costs \$500 a year (only £25 a month). The gym's facilities also include a sauna, café, and hairdressers. It also offers massages, beauty therapy and personal trainers to really put you through your paces. Their sister gym has a swimming pool, but their membership is a bit more expensive. If you are looking for just a swimming pool, there are a number of nice places around Tashkent that are open to the public.

Football is very popular in Uzbekistan and there is no shortage of places to play. Most embassies and international organizations have teams including the British Embassy; everyone is always looking for new talent! Once a year there is a diplomatic tournament hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The tournament also has a non-diplomatic section for local teams and international organizations that do not have enough diplomats. If you fancy a bit of a challenge there is a very well run local indoor league that welcomes anyone who can put together a team.

Tennis lessons and courts for games are widely available and very cheap. The NBU sports complex, a very well equipped venue, offers tennis lessons and is also the location of the Tashkent Open that takes place in autumn every year. Although (as everywhere) the quality of coaching can vary, a qualified trainer and the court hire can set you back as little as \$10-15 per hour in the warmer months (75% of the year).

For those of you who enjoy running and hiking, there is both a hiking club and the Hash House Harriers running club. The hiking club ventures out into the mountains near Tashkent and walks vary from beginner to extreme! Westminster University also offers a badminton club that meets every Saturday.



In spring and summer the weather is fantastic. Although summer temperatures can be very high (upper 30s, low 40s) there are so many swimming pools and shady parks that you never really feel it's a problem. In addition, houses are air conditioned.

Winter Sports.....

Unlike in the UK where winter invariably means grey skies, rain and recently large amounts of snow, winters in Uzbekistan are generally mild. Blue skies and bright sunny days have characterized this past winter (2010/11), with temperatures not dropping to far below freezing. The average winter temperature for Uzbekistan is around -2 C. However you should be warned that the winter of 2007/08 was very harsh with temperatures dropping to -20 C.



Tashkent boasts some of the best nightlife in the region and the people here, both local and expat love to party! Bars like the Irish Pub are reliable expat hangouts where you can expect to see friendly faces almost every night. A substantial portion of the expats are transient, as everywhere, but many have local wives and families in Tashkent and are interesting, educated and influential people. This is nice because it means not all of your contacts leave half-way through your stay if you are on a 2-3 year posting. Equally, if you fancy a break from the usual faces there are many local places you can escape too!

In general, the expat community is small and friendly with invites to what would usually be A-list events (e.g. the Queen's Birthday Party, or Bonfire Night at the British Ambassador's residence) open to all Commonwealth citizens. Additionally, there are regular events such as the US Marine Ball and the Valentine's Ball which are open to everyone. Although a little tacky, they can be fun and a nice excuse to put your best clothes on!

From Tashkent there are regular direct flights to London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Prague, Moscow, Kuala Lumpur Bangkok, Beijing Shanghai, Delhi and most major cities in the Middle East. Flights back to London can cost as little as \$500 - 600 dollars if booked in advance.

Finally, as is hopefully evident from the sections on tourism and history, Uzbekistan has a fascinating history and culture. Living in Tashkent you will be perfectly placed to explore and discover what the country has to offer as well as experience life in an exotic, and off-the-beaten track country!



You are also in a perfect position to explore other Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan with its awe inspiring natural beauty, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.