



ENROLL DIRECT

**“
YOU HAVE TO
BECOME INDISPENSABLE.”**

We met Haider Ali Shad, an international alumnus who arrived in the UK with more than just academic goals. From day one, he treated his master's as a launchpad — not just for a qualification, but for a career.



When Haider Ali Shad landed in the UK for his one-year master's, he knew the odds weren't in his favour. No family safety net. No job waiting at the other end. Just a suitcase, a student visa, and an unshakable belief that the UK could be more than just a classroom — it could be his future.

**THE TRUTH IS: NO ONE WILL
SPONSOR YOU RIGHT AWAY.
YOU HAVE TO PROVE
YOURSELF. YOU HAVE TO
BECOME INDISPENSABLE**

COVER STORY FROM STUDENT TO SKILLED WORKER — HAIDER ALI SHAD'S UK JOURNEY

“From the day I landed, I knew this wasn't just about studying,” Haider tells us. “I came here to build something long-term.” Like many international students, he worked part-time to stay afloat. But he also saw it as a chance to build skills, learn the UK work culture, and start laying the groundwork for sponsorship.

His advice? Stop chasing big brands from the start. Focus on adding value, even in small roles. “Get into a startup or a small company. Learn fast, do more, and make yourself indispensable.” Haider says that smaller companies often offered more opportunities to grow quickly and wear multiple hats.

“In big firms, you're one of hundreds. In small teams, your work is seen — and that's where trust begins.”

“I saved whatever I could and signed up for short courses, project management, digital tools,” he says. “Those add-ons helped me stand out. Your degree gets you noticed, but those skills get you hired.” For Haider, free expos at ExCeL London became his form of entertainment — but also inspiration. While other students decompressed on Netflix, he was walking trade show floors, talking to startup founders, and collecting business cards. Haider urges students to go beyond LinkedIn. “Yes, build your online profile — but get out there. Attend university career events. Go to job fairs. Look for free expos happening in London. Talk to people. Introduce yourself. Ask how you can help.” This approach didn't just build his network. It built trust and eventually gets you referrals, freelance projects, and eventually, a sponsorship offer.



"No one's going to sponsor you just because you ask. You have to become someone they can't afford to lose,"

Haider's story wasn't one of overnight success. It was a slow, deliberate, often exhausting climb. But it worked. After years of balancing jobs, learning on the fly, and making himself useful in rooms where he was often the outsider, he secured a Skilled Worker visa — and finally, a long-term future in the UK.

"The Graduate Route isn't a golden ticket," he said. "It's time. What you do with that time makes all the difference."



Haider Ali Shad's journey from part-time security shifts to full-time sponsored employment isn't just admirable — it's a case study in persistence, strategy, and self-reliance. For thousands of international students navigating similar paths, his story offers both a reality check and a reason to keep going.



Why Choose Enroll Direct?

- Free Consultancy
- IELTS Reimbursement
- Job Placement
- Accommodation Support
- Financial Assistance

Rapid Fire Questions with Haide Ali Shad

What's one thing you wish you knew before coming to the UK?

That the degree alone won't get you hired. You have to build skills, a network, and a story around it.

One piece of advice for students just landing in the UK?

Treat every day like it counts — because it does. Don't wait to 'settle in' before you start building your future.

Most underrated skill in today's job market?

Communication. Especially knowing how to talk about your work in a way that clicks with employers.

What's the smartest investment you made outside your degree?

Short courses. They helped me stand out in interviews and on the job.

Best place to network as a student?

Industry expos — like ExCeL London. Way more powerful than just spamming LinkedIn.

Hardest part of the Graduate Route journey?

The uncertainty. You're always racing the clock — it forces you to move fast and think long-term.

One myth international students should stop believing?

That sponsorship will come automatically if you're 'good enough.' You have to earn it strategically.

First job in the UK?

KFC. Frying chicken, cleaning floors — it was far from glamorous, but it paid the rent and kept me going.

What would you tell the version of yourself who just arrived in the UK?

It's going to be tough, but if you stay hungry and humble, you'll get there.

