

The Wash U Student's Guide to
**University College
London**



UCL, Spring 2012

Academic Year 2014-2015

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Welcome to University College London!

Congratulations on your acceptance into the University College London! For the next semester or academic year, you will be representing Washington University in St. Louis at the University College London. Your time abroad may be challenging at times, but know that it will be ultimately rewarding as you come to see University College London as your home-away-from-home.

This Handbook has been prepared to make your transition to life at UCL as smooth as possible. Please take the time to read the information carefully and share it with your parents. You will also be receiving emails and written transactions from both Washington University and UCL. Pay close attention to these correspondences to ensure that you arrive in London prepared and open to your new surroundings.

If you have any questions or concerns prior to your departure, contact Overseas Programs at overseas@wustl.edu.

Best wishes!

Advice from Past Participants

“London is a wonderful city, full of amazing historical sites and cultural opportunities. There is always something new to see or do, and UCL is situated at the very center of the city.”

-Laura Ingwer, English

General Information

Important Dates

	Suggested Arrival Dates
	UCL Orientation
	First Term Begins
	WU's London Orientation with ACCENT International
	First Term Ends
Jan 6*	Suggested Arrival Dates
January 7-9	UCL Orientation for January Entry students
TBD	WU's London Orientation with ACCENT International
Jan 12	Second Term Begins
Mar 27	Second Term Ends
April 27	Third Term Begins
June 12	Third Term Ends

*You may request to move in early once you have been offered admission and are applying for housing. This depends upon availability, but do mention you are attending the international student orientation (ISOP).

Important Contact Information

Prof. Joe Loewenstein (English)

Faculty Liaison
Campus Box 1122
935-4404
Duncker 125, Umrath 206
jfloewen@artsci.wustl.edu

University College London

International Office
Gower Street London
WC1E 6BT
Telephone: +44 20 7679 7765
international@ucl.ac.uk

Overseas Programs

Campus Box 1088
(314) 935-5958 main line
(314) 935-5555 for emergencies
after office hours
McMillan 138
overseas@artsci.wustl.edu

ACCENT London

Tel: +44-20-7813-7723 from US
Tel: 020-7813-7723 from UK
Emergency Tel: 020 7436 5826 from UK
Emergency Tel: +44 20 7436 5826 from US
london@accentintl.com

Documentation

Student Visitors

For students studying abroad for less than 6 months with no intention of extending your stay another semester and who are NOT planning to work while abroad

You will need to have with you upon entry into the UK the following items (please note that you will need to have these items with you EVERY TIME you leave and reenter the UK if you plan to travel):

- Signed Passport valid for at least 6 months after your return date
- ROUNDTRIP ticket with a return date less than 6 months after the arrival date
- Official Acceptance letter from UK university
- Letter of Financial Guarantee from WU
- **Recommended to have:** Evidence of funds to cover expenses for the semester abroad
 - There is no specific amount that you need to show, but I have included the amounts listed for students applying for visas as a guideline:
 - Academic Year:
 - London: £800/month for 9 months (a total of \$11,538.60 according to today's exchange rate)
 - Fall
 - London: £800/month for 4 months (a total of \$5,128.29 according to today's exchange rate)
 - Spring
 - London: £800/month for 6 months (a total of \$7,692.43 according to today's exchange rate)
 - Conversions from dollars to pounds must be written on the document before arriving at the border (you can handwrite this): www.oanda.com/convert/classic
 - Documents can include a letter from Student Financial Services if you receive financial aid or scholarships, a bank statement in your name, a bank statement in a parent's name along with a signed letter from the parent that you will have access to these funds while abroad, or a letter from the bank

Tier 4 Visas (a.k.a. Adult Student Visas)

- For students studying abroad for more than 6 months or who plan to work, intern, or volunteer in the UK

The processing time generally won't take more than 15 business days.

<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/resources/en/docs/10368946/processingtimescustomers>

- You can pay to use a service like Travaisa, www.travaisa.com if you would like to expedite the process.
- Students cannot apply for the Tier 4 visa until 3 months prior to the start date of the program.

You will need the following items to apply for a student visa:

Please note: all documents must be original documents. The UK Border Agency will NOT accept copies of documents.

- Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies or CAS (Will be sent to you electronically from your program)
 - Do not start the process until after you have received this from your program
- Signed Passport valid for at least 6 months after your return date
- 2 Passport photos (Cannot be digital photos you have printed. These can be taken at Walgreens, etc.)
 - Must have name written on the back of each photo
- Visa Application, including Appendix 8 General Student self-assessment form
 - <http://www.visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/>
- \$530 paid online
- Biometrics
 - Must be done within 2 weeks of sending application
 - After you've submitted your online application, it will prompt you to schedule the Biometrics appointment. You cannot do this before you have submitted the application
 - Make sure to bring your passport
- **Maintenance funds**
 - *They will ask you in the application to declare that you have the required "maintenance funds" to cover your semester/year abroad*
 - *Though you are not required to provide it with your visa application materials, you should be prepared to be able to show evidence of funds just in case they ask to see it*
 - *Academic Year:*
 - *London: £800/month for 9 months (a total of \$11,538.60 according to today's exchange rate)*
 - *Fall*
 - *London: £800/month for 4 months (a total of \$5,128.29 according to today's exchange rate)*
 - *Spring*
 - *London: £800/month for 6 months (a total of \$7,692.43 according to today's exchange rate)*
 - *Conversions from dollars to pounds must be written on the document before arriving at the border (you can handwrite this): www.oanda.com/convert/classic*
 - *Documents can include a letter from Student Financial Services if you receive financial aid or scholarships, a bank statement in your name, a bank statement in a parent's name along with a signed letter from the parent that you will have access to these funds while abroad, or a letter from the bank*

Students who wish to work, intern, or volunteer: If you want British permission to work part-time in the UK, you must apply for the Tier 4 visa regardless, even if you are studying there for less than 6 months. You will be eligible to work a maximum of 20 hours/week during the term and 40 hours/week during term breaks up to the end date of your program.

Money Matters

Spending Money: Remember that the exchange rate is not in favor of the US dollar, so budget carefully. A movie in Central London can cost \$25 and a regular coffee at Starbuck's can run \$4-5. At the time of this publication, **£1 = \$1.6**, or **\$1 = £0.624**. Almost everything in Europe is about 75% more expensive than in the US. Very roughly you will be spending in British pounds almost as much as you might spend in the US in American dollars. This is the first financial shock you can expect.

The second is that exchange rates fluctuate daily so you may be getting more or less British £ every time you change money. Most students use ATM cards to withdraw funds from an American bank account while in the UK. You may also use traveler's cheques (American Express tend to be the best to avoid conversion charges). The best exchange rates however are often obtained through credit card companies so you may find it cheapest and most convenient to use MasterCard or Visa, which are both widely accepted anywhere in Europe. Students who use Bank of America can withdraw money from Barclay's with no fee.

You should plan to convert a small amount of money (about \$300) into British pounds (£) upon your arrival at the airport in London. Alternatively you may choose to bring British pounds with you if you prefer.

Note: American Express credit cards are often not accepted in the UK. Please do not plan to rely on this card to pay for housing or other expenses.

Advice from Past Participants

“Before you leave, you can order pounds through your bank so that you have some when you arrive. Students who have Bank of America can use Barclay's ATMs in London, which is one of the largest banks in the country.”

-Laura Ingwer, Academic Year, English

Academics

University College London is a prestigious British institute of higher education. Located in central London, it is in the vicinity of other Colleges and libraries comprising the University of London. Students are fully integrated into UCL academics in the following ways:

- Study abroad students attend regular classes with degree students – there are no classes specifically for affiliate students
- Study abroad students are treated in exactly the same way as regular degree students in terms of course load, academic support and student services
- UCL transmits back to the home institutions an official transcript of the student's work with contains a list of courses attended, the credit value of each course, and a UCL mark. For US students, a recommended US grade for each course, together with an estimate of the amount of US credits due, will also be shown.¹

Registration and Course Selection

A full course load at UCL is valued at 16 units per semester, which is normally four courses. When you apply for admission to study at UCL, you normally apply to one academic department in which you will take at least 50% of your courses; hence, at least two of your courses must be within the admitting UCL department. Please note that **final course selection cannot be made until you arrive at UCL**. Final decisions about the courses to be taken by a study abroad student are made after discussion with the Affiliate Student Tutor upon arrival at UCL.

At UCL, courses may be one term in length (FT = fall term; ST = spring and summer terms), or a full year (two teaching terms).

- **One-term courses** are taught entirely within one of the two teaching terms (FT or ST).
- **ST**-The spring program is taught over one term and assessed during the second (summer) term. Assessments during summer term are mandatory.
- **Full-year courses** are taught over the two teaching terms and assessed in the third term. It may be possible for students attending for less than the full year to take half of a full-year course, but this will depend on whether there is a viable form of assessment. Each department offering full-year courses has provided information on whether they are available to part-year students, in the following ways:
 - **Year only**: this means the course is only available to students attending UCL for the full academic year
 - **Year, FT, ST**: this means that, in addition to full-year students taking the whole of the course, the first half of the course is available to FT-only students, and/or the second half is available to ST-only students (subject to appropriate prior study), for half of the full-year credit.

¹ Adapted from <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/study-abroad-guide/london/study-abroad-ucl/>

Teaching Style

A study abroad student following an undergraduate program will find that it consists of a series of lectures, seminars and tutorials and, in science and engineering, laboratory classes, which in total account for about 15 hours per week. Arts students may find that their official contact time with teachers is less than this average, while science and engineering students may expect to be timetabled for up to 20 hours per week.

Associated with each lecture course are seminars, tutorials and possibly laboratory classes which draw upon, analyze, illustrate or amplify the topics presented in the lectures. Lecture classes can vary in size from 20 to 200. Seminars and tutorials are on the whole much smaller than lecture classes and in some departments can be on a one-to-one basis.

Students are normally expected to prepare work in advance for seminars and tutorials and this can take the form of researching a topic for discussion, writing essays, or solving problems. Much emphasis is put on private study and students are expected to spend as much time, if not more, studying by themselves as being taught.

The method of assessment for each course will depend on the course and the department in which it is taught. Where possible, students will be assessed in the same way as regular undergraduate students at UCL. Those admitted for the full academic year and for the Spring term will normally be required to take the end-of-year examination in the Summer term (ending in June). Students will not know their examination dates until March. The method of assessment is clearly stated in the subject/departmental entry and this can be confirmed when finalizing course registration upon arrival at UCL.² The final examination or paper typically makes up the majority of the grade in classes. It is not appropriate to ask professors for alternative examination dates or due dates, so students should plan to remain in London through the end of the examination period.

Services

The Tutorial System: In each department, there is an Affiliate Student Tutor who has special responsibility to ensure that all affiliate students are fully integrated into the department and are taking the appropriate courses. These tutors also advise the students on the method of study and assessment for each course and help the student settle in to the department.

UCL Library: With over two million books and subscriptions to around 9,000 journals, UCL's library services provide access to a vast range of resources across all subjects taught. The facilities include a main library and 15 specialist subject libraries. Further information can be found at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library>.

Advice from Past Participants

“Overall, you will be in class for a much smaller amount of time than you would at Wash U: this system requires more independent work than the American one.”

-Laura Ingwer, Academic Year, English

² Adapted from <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/study-abroad-guide/subjects/academic-system/>

Computer and IT Facilities: UCL offers a wide range of IT facilities in open-access cluster rooms and student residences. Many departments also have their own student computer facilities and computer network points are available in individual rooms for most UCL residences.

UCL International Office: The UCL International Office is a center of expertise and advice for overseas students. Affiliate students are welcome to seek help or guidance in many areas such as immigration, housing, finance, transcripts and fees. The UCL International Office is also responsible for the pre-session orientation programs for international students. For information on what is offered during the orientation program, see <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/international/when-you-arrive>. The office also publishes an electronic newsletter, *International Student News*, to keep you up-to-date with issues that affect international students.

Housing

Vast differences in accommodation standards exist between universities in the UK and the US. Students are charged the accommodation fees of the university in the UK and should expect to receive the same accommodation standards as a British student studying at that university. Universities in the UK do their best to ensure that the housing is clean and safe, however students should not expect housing facilities abroad to be the same as they are accustomed to at Washington University in St. Louis. For the spring semester, students will sign an accommodation contract that lasts the entire length of the semester (two UCL terms). Students are responsible for this payment, regardless of the decision to move out early.

The universities in the UK do their best to honor students' housing preferences, however we cannot guarantee that students will be placed in the accommodation of their choice. Like here, some housing facilities are more popular than others and thus receive more requests than rooms available. It is difficult for the universities to find housing for all study abroad students in general, particularly spring semester, let alone in the more popular facilities. In the past, some students have been placed in their last choice.

Visiting students usually are offered a place in either a UCL or intercollegiate residence. The majority of UCL residences are self-catered student houses with kitchens that are shared with other students. The UCL and intercollegiate residence halls include cafeteria meals in the contract rate.

There are essentially three different types of UCL housing:

1. **Student Houses – Self Catering:** These are UCL residences in which students are responsible for providing and cooking their own food and cleaning their own rooms (and common areas if living in flats). Kitchens are provided in which students may prepare their own food. Bed linen is not provided, but can be purchased. Students will need to supply their own kitchen utensils.

2. **UCL Halls of Residence:** The phrase “Hall of Residence” is used to describe catered accommodation, providing breakfast and dinner from Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays and six UCL closure days. These Halls have small kitchens on each floor for student use. Students are responsible for cleaning their own rooms. Students with specific dietary requirements, for whatever reason, are strongly advised to apply for self-catering accommodation only.
3. **Intercollegiate Halls:** (Available to Full Year students only) These Halls are available to students attending UCL and any college of the University of London. Accommodation is in twin or single rooms sharing communal bathrooms on a corridor. Breakfast and dinner are provided daily and lunch is available at weekends. All are independently administered, not by UCL, and students preferring catered accommodation must include these Halls in their preferences when completing their application form.

The majority of this accommodation is within a few minutes walk of UCL with the furthest being about two miles away. The accommodation takes the form of single or (a few) shared study-bedrooms. Most residences now have computer data points connected to the UCL network, for which there is a modest annual charge. Access and security at residences are carefully monitored.³

Here are a few examples and descriptions of residences that have housed Wash U students in the past:

Astor College (Student House – Self-Catering): A purpose-built, centrally heated residence within five minutes walk of the main UCL campus. There are 250 places in carpeted rooms with washbasins and each room has its own refrigerator. Facilities include TV lounges, piano, a common room, squash courts, gymnasium and launderette. Each room has a computer data point.⁴

Advice from Past Participants

“The dorm I lived in [Astor College] was extremely international, and living with people from such a wide range of countries was so interesting and eye-opening.”

-Brittany Bernacchi, Spring, Biology

Schafer House (Student House-Self-Catering): Accommodating 369 students, Schafer House is situated about five minutes' walk from UCL. The accommodation is arranged as self-contained flats, all with their own kitchen/dining area. Students have their own single rooms, each with its own computer data point, which are centrally heated, carpeted and each with a washbasin. There is a launderette, computer cluster room, TV lounge and a bicycle rack.⁵

Ramsay Hall (UCL Hall of Residence): A large Hall providing centrally heated accommodation for over 450 students that is a five minutes' walk from UCL. Fully carpeted and with washbasins in all rooms. Facilities include a TV room, games room,

³ Adapted from <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation/>

⁴ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation/residences/houses>

⁵ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation/residences/houses>

library, launderette, music room and bicycle storage area. Each room has a computer data point. Nearest Underground stations: Goodge Street, Warren Street, Euston Square and Great Portland Street.⁶ Advice from Past participants: “Ten meals a week are provided, communal bathrooms, traditional freshman year experience, and interaction with a greater variety/number of British students.”

General advice from past participants:

For close proximity: Ramsay (Catered), Ian Baker (relatively new, not catered, floor kitchens, people seemed happy here), Astor and Campbell House (more of an open flat style, where groups of people shared bathrooms and kitchens, but all parts of the floor were accessible to everyone so it had more of a communal feel than typical closed in flat-style). Also, Goldsmid House, which is located in Victoria (further from campus): It's a new, nice dorm and she liked it a lot. She had to take the tube (1-2 stops), but Victoria is great because there are lots of theaters and it's right next to Buckingham Palace and Big Ben / Westminster Abbey if being in that location is intriguing to someone.

Student Life

In between studies you will, of course, find time for a little recreation. UCL has a policy of keeping Wednesday afternoons free of teaching, so every student has an opportunity to engage in some sporting, culture or voluntary activity. Such activities include on-campus activities, such as societies, sports, or hanging at the UCL Students' Union, and also exploring London, a city that is full of things to see and do.

Advice from Past Participants

“Attend the Fresher’s Faire (i.e. activity fair) at UCL. I met most of my friends through the Ultimate Frisbee team.”

-Laura Geggel, Spring, English

Societies

In addition to 50 sports clubs, UCL Students' Union runs over 80 societies which allow you to share your interests and enthusiasm with like-minded students, as well as meet and develop friendships with local students. Themes include politics, culture, arts, religion, performance, international, campaigning, etc. Full details of the individual societies and their contact details can be found in the online directory at <http://uclu.org/>

UCL Students' Union

The large and diverse organization that is UCL Union forms the focus of student life at UCL. The Union is run for students by students, with elected student officers working to ensure the breadth and quality of its service.

The Union runs a wide variety of commercial services, all designed to suit student pockets. Different catering outlets serve a variety of foods

Advice from Past Participants

“Find your niche quickly so you can make real friends. I joined basketball and volleyball and I made some fantastic friends that way.”

-Allison Alberts, Spring, Biology

⁶ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation/residences/halls-of-residence>

ranging from burgers and wraps to hot and cold sandwiches and paninis. Its many bars and cozy coffee bars on various sites are very popular and the focal point of many of the Union's social events. The Union's two shops stock essential items such as snacks and stationery. For convenience, there is a cash dispenser, a student employment agency and a hairdresser located within the UCL Union main building.

Sports

UCL provides facilities and opportunities for everyone to get active, whether you are a competitive player of team sports, or simply interested in a yoga class.

Run by the UCL Students' Union, different venues provide for a huge number of activities, from personal fitness routines in the gym to football (soccer) on outdoor pitches. You can also use the full-size swimming pool in the basement of the University of London Union building adjacent to UCL.

The Bloomsbury Fitness Center, located on the main campus, houses a variety of equipment – treadmills, cycle machines, crosstrainers, fixed resistance machines, etc. – with places for 60 users at any one time. Qualified and friendly instructors provide a free gym introduction session and follow-up advice. The center also includes a warming up/stretching area, two squash courts, a dance studio and martial arts Dojo and offers weekly fitness classes.

The Somers Town Community Sports Centre is just a short walk from UCL's Bloomsbury campus. A variety of indoor sports are catered for, including basketball, badminton, netball, football, volleyball, table tennis, and trampolining as well as fitness classes.⁷

Life in London

As well as participating in activities on the UCL campus, you will undoubtedly be taking the opportunity to explore one of the world's most vibrant cities. London is full of museums and galleries, parks, theaters, markets, restaurants, cafes, and nightlife. All the main national collections are free, including the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Science Museum and the Tate Galleries. Cultural venues also run free events such as lunchtime concerts and exhibitions, so there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy the best of London's cultural riches for free. Even if a venue or gallery is not free, there are still many opportunities to enjoy London's activities for less. Always ask about student discounts at tourist spots. Sometimes they are not advertised (for example, at the Tower of London, movie cinemas, playhouses, and Top Shop). Bring along or buy a London guide, or visit <http://www.visitlondon.com/> for ideas on fun places to go.

As in any large city, it is essential that you take care with all aspects of security in central London. Some general tips on safety and security:

⁷ Adapted from <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/international-students/study-abroad/overseas-students-at-ucl/sag/living/leisure>

- Leave your North Face gear at home, as it identifies you as American and makes you an easier target for pick-pocketing.
- Don't carry around large amounts of cash and try to avoid wearing expensive jewelry and clothes.
- **Always** pay attention when you are in large, crowded areas such as busy streets, the Underground, buses, and pubs. Guys: Carry your wallet inside your front coat pocket. Girls: Do the same or have a purse you can sling across your body.
- **Do not** give strangers or even casual friends your address and try to avoid telling them you are a student and letting them know your timetable.
- Keep your flat door locked at all times, and do not leave windows open or unlocked.
- When going out at night, travel in groups and be aware of your surroundings. Walk confidently. If using the Underground late at night, sit in the carriage behind the driver at the front, or sit in a carriage with four or more groups or individuals.⁸
- Don't get into unmarked cabs. All cabs legally have to be marked and are not allowed to solicit passengers. Unmarked cars or drivers who solicit passengers are likely criminals who will overcharge or possibly rob you.

Communication

Telephone

Many students choose to purchase a cell phone abroad, which is usually cheaper than enabling your U.S. phone to work internationally. Mobile World has a pay-as-you-go system, in which students can purchase a phone and then "top up" (add money) as it is used. All plans differ, so find the one that works best for you. Keep in mind that making calls in England can be expensive, and so most people chose to text instead of call.

Internet and Email

University College London provides its students with an e-mail address, and a variety of ways to access email and the internet. Many departments have their own computer labs and computer network points are available in individual rooms for most UCL residences. In addition UCL's wireless network provides secure web and email access in many locations across UCL.⁹

Skype

Skype allows you to make calls from your computer to anywhere in the world. Skype calls are free between Skype accounts, and can also make calls to landlines and cell phones. For more information, go to <http://www.skype.com/>.

Advice from Past Participants

"Skype works really well for students who are in London, especially since every room has an internet connection. Bring a headset with you."

-Laura Ingwer, Academic Year, English

⁸ Adapted from *ACCENT International Anglo-American Handbook*

⁹ Adapted from <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/international-students/study-abroad/overseas-students-at-ucl/sag/studying/resources>

Transportation and Travel

Getting There

You will arrange your travel to England independently. In setting a return date, bear in mind that you must remain for your last scheduled exam – that is, **early exams are not allowed**. You should not ask your lecturers for special exam dates. Spring semester participants will not find out their exam schedule until mid-March, so we advise students to plan to be in London through the last day of exams as a precaution.

You might use STA Travel (<http://www.statravel.com>), which specializes in student travel, or consult another travel agency. You can also use online booking systems like <http://www.expedia.com> or <http://travelocity.com>. You can also work directly with an airline (especially if you have access to frequent flyer miles). **Pay careful attention to the restrictions. Lowest fares tend to be both non-refundable and unchangeable.**

Note: Overseas Programs will reimburse you for up to £30 for transportation from the airport to your UCL housing. Save your receipts and give them to ACCENT London at your orientation for a reimbursement.

Upon arrival at London's Heathrow or Gatwick Airports, you have several options for getting to your assigned UCL housing, as follows:

1) Most expensive and easiest option: **Taxi**

Depending on what time you arrive, you may have a long taxi ride stuck in rush-hour traffic, which will significantly increase your fare. Regular fares from Heathrow to central London are estimated at £50 or \$100 US.

2) Convenient and not too expensive: **Heathrow Express & Taxi**

You can catch the Heathrow Express train from the international terminal of Heathrow Airport. It is a high-speed train that leaves every 15-20 minutes and only stops at Paddington Station in central London. The train is very much suited for travelers, luggage racks included. The cost is under 20 GBP. From Paddington Station, you should be able to take a taxi to your accommodations for 10-20GBP.

2) Intermediate option: **Hotel Shuttle**

You can take a shuttle from Heathrow to hotels in central London, and then take a taxi from the hotel to your UCL housing. See <http://www.skyshuttle.co.uk/> for details.

3) Cheapest but “hard to manage with luggage” option: **Tube/Train**

You can take the tube directly from Heathrow into central London for just a few pounds, but you will need to change lines and many downtown tube stations do not have escalators. There is a train in from Gatwick and you can take a cab from the London terminus to your UCL housing.

Getting Around

The Tube is the easiest method for traveling around London; it reaches nearly every area of the central city and usually runs very efficiently. London also has an extensive bus system. For maps, fares and timetables, see <http://www.tfl.gov.uk>.

While in London, it is extremely helpful to keep a street and Tube map with you. For navigating the Underground system, you can pick up a mini Tube map from any Tube station. When using public transportation, remember that trains begin running at about 6:00 am each day and last trains leave between midnight and 12:30 am. They may stop running a little earlier on Sunday nights.

Many students choose to purchase an Oyster Card, a card that can store up to £90 which allows you to pay-as-you-go on the Tube, tram, buses, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), London Overground, and some National Rail services in London. In general, single trips purchased with the card are cheaper, and the Oyster Card also has daily price capping, which prevents you from ever spending more than the cost of a day travel card in a single day.

Students are encouraged to apply for a student Oyster Card before arriving in London.

Advice from Past Participants

“95% of the time, you should only buy a plan that covers Zones 1 and 2 of the city. The areas of Zone 3-6 are the suburbs. If you need to go out to Heathrow Airport, which is in Zone 6, you can go to one of the Assistance stands and ask to add the proper amount to the Oyster card for a trip to Heathrow.”

-Laura Geggel, Spring

The London Transport area is divided into six zones. For the most part, you only need to buy a Travelcard for zones 1 and 2 as all King’s campuses and residences are located within these. Keep your travel pass with you for the entire trip on the Tube or buses, as you may be checked by security officers. The fine is £20 if you are checked and cannot produce a ticket or pass.

Also, keep in mind that some Underground stations do not have escalators, so avoid bringing heavy bags on the subway. Some traveler-packed stations *may* have workers near stairs to help you with your bags.

Other Travel

London is well situated for travel to just about anywhere; nearly every airline passes through one of its four airports and there are also many trains available. Consider getting an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), which will entitle you to discounts on a range of services, including travel. See www.isic.org for details.

Advice from Past Participants

“Cheap flights are easy to find to most destinations. Railpasses are great for longer stretches of traveling, although many of those don’t include the UK. Backpacking tours are good if you’re traveling alone, since they’re usually geared towards people in their 20’s and take care of many of the planning details for you.”

-Laura Geggel, Spring

“I liked to stay in London. I wanted to really live in the city and not worry about traveling.”

-Allison Alberts, Spring

Before You Go

Packing Tips

UCL will not provide you with bedding or kitchen utensils (if you are in self-catered housing). One option is to bring these from home, but to save packing room many students chose to buy linens, bedding and utensils upon their arrival. Students recommend **Primark** for inexpensive household goods.

Also, be aware that many US toiletries brands are available in England, but not all are. If you are brand-specific, bring the toiletries you will need with you; otherwise, it's a good idea to save the space and buy once you arrive.

Here are some suggestions and tips for what to bring:

- Work around a basic scheme of coordinated colors to minimize the number of clothing items you bring with you
- Wash-and-wear shirts
- Sturdy, comfortable pair of walking shoes that have been well broken in
- Adapter plugs (if you plan to use US appliances)
- Laptop computer if you have one; you can buy an inexpensive adaptor cord at an electronics store
- Alarm clock (wind-up or battery-powered/extra batteries)
- Umbrella or raincoat
- If you wear contact lenses, you should take your eye care products with you
- Prescription medicine – enough to cover your entire stay, and bring a copy of your prescription and a letter from your doctor outlining your medical condition and the medication required just in case you run out
- You may wish to take along a few small token gifts; something typically American or representative of the area in which you live in the U.S.
- Some students recommend that you leave room in your bags when you go so you'll have more room on the way home
- Make sure each piece of luggage (even carry-on) has an address tag. It is also a good idea to put a copy of your address inside each piece of luggage.
- Finally, before you leave home, make sure you can comfortably carry all of your luggage at one time (try it for 15 minutes)

Advice from Past Participants

“A good rain/winter coat is important in London, as are shoes you can walk in for long distances. The weather can vary a lot in a single day, so the best idea is to bring clothes you can layer easily.”

-Laura Ingwer, Academic Year

Vocabulary

Popular British Dishes

Savory Foods

Black Pudding – Sausage made from blood and cows fat.

Bubble and Squeak – Patties made with leftover cabbage, potatoes and vegetables and then fried.

Cornish Pastry – Pastry case stuffed with meat and folded over.

English Breakfast = The traditional English breakfast is not really eaten very much anymore, but you may see it on menus. It normally consists of sausage, bacon, fried eggs, mushroom and tomato. You may also see black pudding on the side.

Fish and Chips = Perhaps the most famous dish from the UK, the dish consists of fish deep fried in batter and “chips” (French fries).

Haggis – Traditional Scottish dish made with sheep’s stomach.

Ploughman’s = Traditionally a farmer’s lunch but now popular in pubs and restaurants. Consists of cheese, bread, Branston pickle, and maybe a pork pie.

Pork Pie – Heavy meat pie.

Sausage Roll – Minced sausage in a light pastry case.

Scotch Egg – Hard-boiled egg wrapped in minced pork and breadcrumbs

Shepherd’s Pie = Minced beef or lamb in gravy topped with mashed potatoes and baked in the oven.

Steak and Kidney Pudding – Steak and kidney in thick gravy encased in a suet pudding.

Sunday Lunch = Previously, it was a custom for families to have a large meal at lunchtime on Sundays. It normally consists of roast meat (pork, beef or lamb), Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes, roast parsnips, peas and carrots, all covered with gravy.

Toad in the Hole – Yorkshire pudding with sausage baked into it.

Yorkshire Pudding – Savory batter pudding made with eggs, flour and milk.

Sweet Foods

Bread and Butter Pudding – Made with leftover or stale bread, which is buttered, soaked with milk, and then raisins and sugar are added. It is then baked and served hot.

Cream Tea – Scones with jam and clotted cream (thick yellow cream) normally served with other small cakes and possibly sandwiches.

Fruit Crumble – Stewed fruit topped with a crumble mix made out of butter, flour, sugar and water.

Mince Pies – Pastry cases enclosing a sweet mix of dried fruits, and mince.

Spotted Dick – Sponge pudding filled with raisins.

Treacle Pudding – Sponge pudding topped with treacle (dark sugar syrup) and steamed

Trifle – Sponge biscuits, jelly and fruit topped with custard and whipped cream. Often contains sherry.

Victoria Sponge – Two sponge cakes layered with jam.

Basic Foods

aubergine = eggplant

bap = a soft, round, floury bun for sandwiches

biscuits = cookies

chips = French Fries

courgettes = zucchini

crisps = potato chips

crumpet = a doughy, slightly salty breakfast pastry the size of an English muffin

digestives = a wheat biscuit, often dipped in chocolate

flapjacks = not pancakes, but a sweet square of baked oats, often with a sweet condiment mixed in

juicy bits = pulp (i.e. in orange juice)

mangetout = snow peas

marmite = a salty, sour spread made from yeast and pickles

mince = ground beef

pudding = dessert

sultanas = raisins made with white grapes

Shopping/Home

bin = trashcan

blitz = to dry clothes using an electric dryer

fabric conditioner = fabric softener

flat = apartment

jumper = sweater/sweatshirt

pants = underwear

plastic = a Band-Aid

Tipp-Ex = correction tape

trainers = athletic shoes

trolley = a shopping cart

trousers = pants

washing up liquid = dishwashing liquid

Getting Around

car park = parking lot

cashpoint = ATM

chemist = pharmacy

lift = elevator

loo = toilet (informal)

mind the gap = watch your step

queue = line

quid = pounds

stalls = orchestra seats in a theater

ta/cheers = thank you

Uni = University

WC = "water closet"; bathroom

Useful Websites

British Government Website for Visa Services: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/>

British Embassy in the USA: <http://www.britainusa.com/>

London Tourist Information: <http://www.visitlondon.com>

Skype: <http://www.skype.com/>

Transport for London (Public Transportation Information): <http://www.tfl.gov.uk>

UCL Accommodation Information: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/accommodation/>

UCL Housing Services: <http://housing.london.ac.uk/cms/>.

UCL International Student Newsletter: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/iss/during-your-studies/newsletter>

UCL Library: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library>

UCL Study Abroad Guide: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/study-abroad-guide/>