

International Student Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2013

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London welcomes the Year of the Snake

Chinese New Year, also known as the spring festival, will begin on 10 February 2013. The year will be 4711 on the Chinese calendar and will mark the start of the Year of the Snake.

New Year celebrations in China

In China traditionally celebrations will last 15 days, the first week is dedicated to visiting family and friends, and is followed by special traditions designed to bring good luck. People clean their houses before the celebrations begin in order to sweep away any bad luck.

On New Year's Eve, all brooms, dustpan and brushes are put away so that good luck can not be swept away. Houses are decorated with paper scrolls with good luck phrases such as 'Happiness' and 'Wealth'. Families get together for a large traditional meal, which is usually *djiaozi* (a steamed dumpling) in the north and *nian gao* (a sticky, sweet rice pudding) in the south. People dress head to toe in new red clothes, believing this will scare away evil spirits, and stay up until midnight setting off fireworks to frighten away evil spirits.

On New Year's Day children wake up to find a red envelope filled with money and sweets under their pillows left by their parents and grandparents. Chinese New Year ends with the lantern festival on the day of the full moon.

The mystery of the year of the Snake

The Chinese calendar follows a 12-year cycle with each year named after an animal.

The Chinese believe that people born in a particular year take on the characteristics of the animal associated with that year. Those born in the Year of the Snake are charming, wise, patient and unforgiving.

With the Snake being the most complex force in the 12-year zodiac cycle, we can expect its Year to be intense and "unsettled" but it will be well spent if one focuses on reflection, planning and in contemplation of long-sought solutions.

Chinese New Year in London

The London Chinese New Year celebrations are the largest outside Asia. The parade will begin at 10am from Trafalgar Square and can be followed through China Town, ending in Rupert Street at 11am.

The "Dotting of the Eye" ceremony will commence at noon in Trafalgar Square and will bring the dragons and lions to life, marking the start of the day's entertainment. A stunning fireworks display at 5.55pm will mark the end of the day's celebrations.

Chinese New Year

The full Chinese New Year schedule can be found on the [Chinatown London website](#). Visit [TimeOut](#) for information on all events taking place in London this month.

UCL Talent Bank: Taking UCL talent to the world

UCL Careers has launched a new service to help UCL students and graduates get into jobs, internships and placements.

Many organisations want to target specifically UCL graduates so UCL Careers are working with a range of businesses to get them in touch with you. Small and medium sized businesses, charities and UCL alumni have all shown interest and can offer internships, placements or graduate roles in a range of industries.

Recently some of the jobs coming through have been from businesses targeting students with specific languages, for example an Analyst/Trader vacancy which requires Korean speakers at a private investment firm.

These types of roles are perfect for international students, with some also offering sponsorship to work in the UK.

[Register & view current opportunities >>](#)



UCL Talent Bank

UCL Careers Service works with employers in all industries to provide jobs, internships and placements for students and graduates.

GradLink: A job site for Indian, Chinese & Malaysian students

The University of the West of England, UK has launched a project helping Indian, Chinese and Malaysian students at UK universities connect with leading graduate employers back home.



All UCL students from India, China and Malaysia can use GradLink free of charge to access the jobs board, and make connections with HR departments at top firms such as Deloitte, Accenture, Intel and Pricewaterhouse Cooper.

The GradLink project has proven very successful with both students and employers; the UK/China GradLink is currently receiving 500 unique visits per week.

The project is being continuously developed and is expected that a chat room, offering students the chance to interact with each other and exchange job search tips and ideas, will be introduced shortly.

[More information and jobs boards >>](#)

Workshops for students whose main language is not English

UCLU has organised a range of workshops to help you enhance your conversational English and academic writing skills. All workshops are free and the places are limited to 30 students per session to facilitate interaction and participation. Please email Diana Hawk - d.hawk@ucl.ac.uk, stating your name, workshop preference, UCL department and nationality, to reserve a place.

When is 'the' used in English? 8 Feb 2013 - 13:00-14:00

This workshop will introduce the key principles when deciding to use (or not use) 'the'. You will also be able to critically review your own and other students' work.

[Email to book a place >>](#)



British culture & conversation: Politics and Current Events 19 Feb 2013 - 11:00-12:00

This session will be interactive and you will learn about British culture as well as practice your conversational English skills.

[Email to book a place >>](#)

Structuring an essay 22 Feb 2013 - 13:00-14:00

You will hear what makes a good essay, what phrases and structures to use, and look at examples of good and bad writing. You will be given tips on how to improve your writing technique.

[Email to book a place >>](#)



British culture & conversation: Idioms & slang 26 Feb 2013 - 11:00-12:00

This interactive workshop aims to help you learn about British culture and give you the chance to practice your conversational skills over a cup of tea and biscuits.

[Email to book a place >>](#)

Referencing & Bibliographies 1 March 2013 - 13:00-14:00

This workshop will revisit the methods generally used when referencing in an essay, as well as at the end of it. You are encouraged to bring samples of your own work in order to have a critical discussion.

[Email to book a place >>](#)



British culture & conversation: Music, TV & film 5 March 2013 - 11:00-12:00

This is the third of the British culture & conversation workshops, which will focus on the British entertainment industry. Tea and biscuits will be provided, as well as a friendly chat.

[Email to book a place >>](#)

Valentine's Day Special: Romance may (not) be required

Across the world, 14 February is celebrated as Valentine's Day, a day for lovers and romantics to give gifts to their partners, friends and family.

In the UK, chocolates, flowers and jewellery are the traditional Valentine's Day gifts, many couples mark the occasion by going out for a romantic dinner or spending the day together.

The period surrounding Valentine's Day is also an opportunity to go out and enjoy London. The listings site [Time Out](#) has a page on Valentine's Day activities – from visiting the *Love in the Natural World* exhibition at UCL's very own [Grant Museum of Zoology](#) to a [Champagne Cruise](#) on the River Thames - there is something to suit every couple.



ROMANCE NOT REQUIRED

Speed Lingua: Valentine's Day

14 February 2013, 5.30pm

Print Room Cafe. £2 entry

A fun take on speed-dating (romance not required). Meet a language partner and students from around the world.

Tickets available from ucl.org/shop

For more info: [facebook.com/uclu.isf](https://www.facebook.com/uclu.isf)



In the past few years there has also been a rise in *anti*-Valentine's activities for single people – pubs, bars and clubs will run special evenings which aim to ignore the romantic theme of the day.

If this sounds more like your thing, you can check out *Speed Lingua - Valentine's Special*, a variation of *Speed Dating*, but not necessarily with the romance. This event is hosted by UCLU International Student Forum and offers an easy and sociable way to pick up a new language, or improve your language skills as well as meet other UCL students from all over the world. All levels are welcome, complimentary chocolates will be available at the event.

[More information and tickets >>](#)

Whatever you choose to do on 14 February, remember that, as Shakespeare so eloquently put it "*Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind.*" Make the most of the city and broaden your mind this Valentine's Day.

Volunteer and connect with the local community

UCLU Volunteering Services Unit (VSU) offers a variety of volunteering projects that can help you get involved with the community, contribute to other people's lives, improve your confidence gain work experience and enhance your CV. If this sounds for you, below are some of the future events and one off volunteering projects offered by VSU.

LGBT+ Volunteering Fair *21 Feb 2013 - 17:30-20:00* *Wilkins Old Refectory*

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) charities will showcase their volunteering opportunities.

If you are interested in finding out about the LGBT+ sector, go along to the fair for some for drinks and nibbles.

[More information](#)

Gardening Working Party *17 Feb 2013 - Avenue* *House, Finchley Central*

Role: Gardening Volunteer

The Avenue House Estate Trust is a charity that manages a historic Victorian mansion and its associated ten acres of gardens as a free public park. You will help with clearing brambles sycamore seedlings, weeding etc.

Contact [Hilary Jarvis](#)

Great Daffodil Appeal *1 March 2013* *City of London*

Marie Curie Cancer Care provides nursing care to terminally ill patients in their own homes, while offering support to the families. They need volunteers to help sell daffodils at tube stations across the city, hoping to raise £50,000 in one day.

Contact [Pippi Reade](#)

International Support
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